

THE HIDDEN FAITH:

An Occult Story of
the Period.



By ALWYN M. THURBER.



*"Perchance 'twas a fault in themselves, I am bound not
To say: this I know—that these two creatures found not
In each other some sign they expected to find,
And, missing it, each felt a right to complain
Of the sadness which each found it hard to explain."*

—LUCILLE.



F. M. Harley Publishing Co.,
87-89 Washington St.,
Chicago.

Bancroft

81274241
R4

COPYRIGHT,
F. M. HARLEY PUBLISHING CO.,
—1895.—

11950 F

11950F
OCT 30 1956 MS

PREFACE.

For the heresies in this book I make no apology. As heresies, they are of the heart, not of the head. I have not *studied*, but have *felt*, the teachings herewith recorded. Minds which are in a condition to receive, will receive. Others will pass the story by as a mere author's ambition. Whether it is this, or whether it is an honest attempt at being honest, I leave the reader to decide. But I trust the work has been written as a primer is written, so plain that no complaint of obscurity will be heard. Then I shall have been satisfied.

A. M. T.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER.	PAGE.
I. SOMBER REFLECTIONS, . . .	9
II. A MODERN MAGICIAN, . . .	17
III. ONE HOME OF MANY, . . .	31
IV. MORE MYSTICAL TEACHINGS, .	38
V. A MERE INCIDENT,	49
VI. A QUICK REWARD,	62
VII. BREAKING THE NEWS, . . .	76
VIII. THE MAGIC MIRRORS, . . .	90
IX. DIFFERING OPINIONS, . . .	108
X. A WORK OF LOVE,	124
XI. AN UNEXPECTED ARRIVAL, .	136
XII. AN HOUR ON 'CHANGE, . .	149

XIII.	A MYSTIC LODGE-ROOM,	. 166
XIV.	HEALTH AXIOMS, . . .	176
XV.	CHURCH POLITY, . . .	191
XVI.	A MATURE DECISION, . . .	199
XVII.	OF THE NEW FAITH, . . .	208
XVIII.	HERO TO THE RESCUE,	. 220
XIX.	A KNIGHT OF THE GRIP, . . .	242
XX.	SEEKING FOR GUIDANCE, . . .	256
XXI.	A SCENE IN THE CRYSTAL, . . .	271
XXII.	A DENOUEMENT, . . .	283
XXIII.	CONCLUSION,	290

THE HIDDEN FAITH.

CHAPTER I.

SOMBER REFLECTIONS.

Mr. Edward Thorpe paused in his walk and looked abstractedly down, like one in a dream.

"Still unsolved, and still unsolvable," he mused, in the tones of a troubled philosopher. "Really, can anything be farther from one's reach than a solution of life itself? The deeper a fellow gets into it the less he knows about it. Society says to the average young man, 'Get married,' and ninety-nine times out of a hundred he obeys. What then? Has his divinest duty been performed? It is now five years since I committed the conventional folly — five years if it's been a day — and who can say,

or who can gainsay, that even I have not a lawful right to this very hour of misery—oh, well, I won't call it that—but——”

The sentence remained unfinished, while a look akin to remorse appeared upon the speaker's tightly compressed lips. Evidently his words had refused to express the agonies which welled up from out his generous, over-generous soul.

He had no more than ceased speaking than there came a familiar tap upon his shoulder.

“I say, my dear man, what's the news?”

A half-bantering voice had broken suddenly in upon Mr. Thorpe's reverie, like a dash of momentary sunshine.

“News?” queried Thorpe, raising his brooding eyes to those of his friend and neighbor, Robert Fletcher, who at that moment was regarding him with a jolly concern.

“Why, yes. In other words, how are the folks, and has the little one recovered from its fever? Mrs. Fletcher called at your house a few days since, and a sorry time you

were having of it all around," and with this Robert took the arm of his sedate friend and urged him along with him down the broad avenue.

"Yes, I dare say," coincided Thorpe, a little absently. Then he pulled himself together and said with forced cheerfulness: "We're all right, I guess. The fever has quite left us, I believe; but a mortal never knows just when he is proof against some contagion or other. It's the boon of mankind, I suppose."

"Contagion? — why, yes — you don't mean——"

"Oh, I mean—not altogether the numerous ills that beset the children, but those other contagions which get into the family in spite of us; in a roundabout way, perhaps—but they do manage to squeeze themselves in, somehow. You know what I mean?"

"'Pon my word I do not," replied Robert. Very little had come up to dim the skies of his few short months of married life. "Our

little one had the measles and we called the doctor——”

Thorpe could only laugh in derision. “The measles!” he echoed. “You haven’t grasped my meaning in the least. I had reference to ailments of another kind altogether. However, you may not have observed just where the world is drifting to, anyway. Even the best married among us seem not wholly safe from the foe. Why, my good neighbor,” recited Thorpe, now quite in earnest, “there is contagion all about us.”

Robert pinched his friend’s arm with a jovial grip. “It strikes me, Thorpe, that this is not the first time you have shown these symptoms. I am now positively curious to learn what it’s all about. Come, old man, what has the world been doing to you? I will wager my hat you haven’t once noticed what a magnificent day it is overhead; now have you?”

But Thorpe only smiled a little bitterly, and withheld his explanations. Fletcher, being a man of sunny temperament, had

also a clever gift of speech, and it was not his way to let go his chance to improve it. So, overlooking his friend's chariness, he said, encouragingly:

"Come to think of it, now, have you met Doctor Wade since he returned?" Thorpe shook his head dubiously. "Well, the Doctor is back, and do you know, he is about the most exemplary man living. All those wrinkles common to age have left his face, he walks erect, talks in the gentlest tones, and I am certain nothing short of an earthquake would startle him. I have formed quite a habit lately of dropping in upon him, and would you believe it, the kind-hearted oracle is always ready to receive me with a hearty handshake. He is never in a hurry—never. You didn't know him very well at best, did you?"

Thorpe again shook his head, this time a little ruefully. He was used to his friend's runnings on, so his words did not always produce the most decided effect upon him. Soon, however, he said out of deference to good manners:

"I have no right to trouble you, I suppose, with matters which you have never experienced. But when your five years of married life are up, Robert, I want you to drop around and give me an account of yourself. If to obtain even an average understanding of life then doesn't tax your efforts to the utmost, I shall be greatly mistaken. Now, really," he urged, with a certain earnestness in his words, "while we are talking, did you ever know of a married man starting out with better prospects than were mine? No, you didn't; and now I'll tell you what is a fact—and all this in the strictest confidence, mind you—that the one family closet that hasn't at least the shadow of a skeleton in it is the scarcest of all curiosities in these latter days."

"Very finely said," quoth Robert, with a mock air of acquiescence. "I presume I must bow consent to your superior wisdom. You affirm that such things be; but why?"

"The Lord only knows why. Why was not Adam and the long line of unfortunates who came after him created perfect at

birth? One question is as easily answered as the other."

"Oh, well, of late I shirk these ponderous reasonings, and turn them over to the Doctor. His ready-made answers seem to fit every time. Now, in good faith, Thorpe, what do you say to seeing Doctor Wade yourself? He has a panacea for every ill imaginable; indeed, he has."

Thorpe laughed dryly. "Perhaps he has," he said, a curt sensitiveness putting any amount of doubt into his words.

"See him—I would," urged Fletcher, giving his friend's arm an extra shake. This proved to be his parting words, for just then he added: "Here is my car. I am on my way up town on urgent business, so must leave you. Good-by, I say, old man, and now please don't look down upon your lot with such deuced serious eyes. Life is every whit what we make it, turn about as we may," he added, and casting a quizzical glance back as he swung himself aboard the car.

"Silver-tongued songster! what a truly fabulous creature is Robert; unsuspecting,

unexperienced, and presumably happy," soliloquized Thorpe, taking time to note his whereabouts, for he had permitted his friend to lead him most aimlessly out of his way. "Verily, when one is not on his guard one becomes an easy prey to his friends," he remarked, with a shade of morbid humor. "Oh, but I once stood in Robert's shoes—I was happy then. But was I even conscious of it? There's the rub. The suffering domestic sinner does not live; he is constantly looking forward to the time when life shall begin. When his wisdom warrants life, he is ready to go to pieces. However radiant-ly the sun may shine within an unlearned heart, there is the waspish reality to follow—and then—better that one's days shall be spent in an almshouse—anywhere, rather than in the four walls of a legalized habitation. If Robert only lives long enough he will deserve my loftiest sympathies—certainly he will," he repeated, quite listlessly.

Having once more got his bearings he started with uncertain step back to the street which would lead him toward that place he called home.

CHAPTER II.

A MODERN MAGICIAN.

But the words of those we love do not always touch us with their deepest meanings at first. Even before Thorpe reached home the true light of his friend Fletcher's advice began to dawn upon him. What if he might not profit by it indeed, if no more than to take a casual look at this most contented of beings, Doctor Emmet Wade, whom he had heard so much about from other sources. Rumor had it that the Doctor, having passed through worlds of domestic trouble in early life, had, because of his deep spiritual nature, suffered much, had even closely approached death's door, had been illuminated, had risen into a new life, had disappeared from sight for several years, had married again, and at last had returned and opened a house which was to-

day thronged with many visitors from far and near. As a remembrance of these rumors came slowly back to him, Thorpe began to marvel that he had not been attracted to the Doctor before. Possibly the moment had not arrived until now, for, indeed, as he turned the thought over a warming assurance began stealing over him, which, in the condition he found himself to-day, was an assurance most welcome and alluring.

"I might go to him this very moment — I've a blessed good mind to, really," he reasoned, taking out his watch. "It is yet early in the day—come, now," said he, addressing the earthly man with a sudden freakishness of manner, "that twittering songster, Robert, has put a deuced queer notion into your head, now hasn't he?" But the physical self only answered the superior ego with a poise of willingness quite surprising to the dual man; and thus as he gradually became used to the thought his impulse to see the Doctor began forming itself into a positive desire. "It's all a little sudden,

I know, but I guess I will run over to his house now," he affirmed, quite emphatically, and in a moment more he found himself stepping along with a more elastic tread than was his wont.

Within the distance of two blocks a plain, roomy, rather ancient-looking building, which set a little back from the walk, came in sight, the one home, it was said, now already quite famous for containing a soul which had come into actual contact with its Maker.

A ring at the old-fashioned bell, and the door of the humble mansion swung open with an almost cheery invitation. A dapper little lady, dressed in a white cap and with a beaming smile upon her face, admitted Thorpe, and seated him in a small, cozily furnished room near the entrance. When the visitor had given his card to his hostess, he sank into a deeply cushioned seat, like one who was quite ready to drop into the lap of restful luxury because of the stifling, habitual languor within him. Something for the moment soothed and

comforted him. What indeed could it have been?

"If you please, sir, the Doctor will see you now," came the summons upon Thorpe's willing ear.

Thorpe arose and followed the daintily dressed housewife toward the rear of the dwelling. Even the beaming little creature seemed to have music in her words and movements, for she seemed to glide along with a rhythmic, effortless step, quite in keeping with her surroundings. At the end of a long passageway a short flight of steps led up to a room overlooking a garden of flowers and green foliage.

As the door opened into the Doctor's study, all feeling of mental pain fled from Thorpe's consciousness, and as if from some mysterious but hearty impulse he reached forth his hand to him who, rightly enough, had earned the name of humanity's enduring friend.

"I was expecting you," was the assuring response to Thorpe's friendly greeting.

"Expecting me?" questioned Thorpe, still

holding the hand, the touch of which seemed to fill him with renewing life.

"Most certainly," returned the Doctor, motioning his visitor to a chair. "You are but one of many callers to-day, and I congratulate you for having come at the appointed hour."

"At the appointed hour?" again murmured Thorpe, now quite bewildered.

"Oh, to be sure; but please be seated and I will explain."

Thorpe sat down and looked intently at the genial, placid face of his venerable friend, and the depths of goodness he saw therein seemed limitless.

"You think it strange, but, really, there is nothing strange about it. The smallest minutiae of the universe are governed by fixed laws. The events in your life to-day, though seemingly trivial, were immutably planned and necessary to your well-being. The moment the thought to come here occurred to you, I became instantly cognizant of your needs. This being the case, it is doubtless time we were acquainted, to say

the least. Does it seem as though we were strangers?" and a pleasant smile looked out from the corners of the Doctor's eyes.

"We are not strangers," declared Thorpe, with some secret impulse. "You may have known my family."

"Ah, yes; there you have it. I want you to know that your good father and I were once bosom playmates. Busy little fellows were we, with our petty differences and indifferences; I have thought of it many times of late. Even then we were weaving webs of human love we knew not of. We were the happiest of companions always; and permit me the somewhat illogical belief that out of that very friendship of ours has sprung your desire to come to my house to-day. This law of love is unalterable. But," suddenly spoke the Doctor, "let me say, incidentally, that your trouble is not half so deep as you imagine."

Thorpe, who was a man of some intellectual vigor, was not a little surprised at this. Into the eyes of his counselor he gazed as if searching for some hidden secret. But only

the most honest, open generosity could he see there, such as soothes and convinces in one and the same moment. What a place was this! The room, large and well filled with mellow sunlight, was a picture of itself. Beside the usual adornments, there hung upon the walls many charts and emblems, and pictures of oriental life, signs of the Zodiac and diagrams showing the planets in their numerous conjunctions. Several large cases of books stood here and there, and there was much else tending to give the place an atmosphere of profound thought and learning. All these Thorpe took in at a glance while seating himself before the Doctor. Was it possible, he thought, for a man to become a wizard from choice? So great seemed the personal aura of his friend, that Thorpe became painfully aware of his own littleness of self. Trouble? Why, no; his was not trouble. What, then, had sent him thither to consult this gravest of counselors?

"I beg your pardon," he at last found words to say, "but you must bear with me

if I tell you that I do not understand. Your manner of speaking of things is a most unusual one."

The Doctor answered the remark with a friendly little laugh of patronage.

"But do none come to you except those in trouble?"

"In some trouble, real or imaginary, perhaps. In your case, for instance, the load you are laboring under is largely imaginary. A poor soul who just went from here is starving. You marvel at this, do you? But, though the astute old fellow is a man of several millions, the canker of starvation is now actually gnawing at his vitals. That is trouble. I only so much as hinted that he let go his clutch upon his wealth for a time, but the very thought caused him to quake with fear. He will do well to order his tombstone at once. However, since the yoke you are carrying is the most common one known to humanity, the lessons of reparation you must learn are many, very many. But, lest you should become discouraged, I want to affirm the fact that a

complete deliverance is in store for you, if you choose to wait, and learn wisdom by waiting."

Thorpe gave the speaker another searching look of inquiry. What a far-reaching revelation might this be, and what a potent soul assurance was contained in the words he had just listened to. He had not so much as a chance to state his case, much less to announce that he was a victim to trouble. He could have deemed it all as shrouded in mystery, but for the sweet peace, full of persuasive tenderness, which pervaded every word the Doctor spoke. His inmost thoughts seemed already administered unto, but how? He had read much of the adepts of old, but had passed them by as of another age, and yet, here was evidence of an unquestioned display of the true Christ love given out by the humblest of individuals, in words clothed even with the gift of second sight worthy of the ablest magicians.

"I shall be unable to entrust more than a few general facts to you to-day," the Doctor said, slowly, and with measured distinct-

ness. "First, it is my belief that marriage, as the world comprehends it, is false and meaningless. I do not say this because of any personal cynicism; it is a mere fact along with many other popular misconceptions of mankind. You, my friend, have been tided in upon this rivulet of error, and being a sensitive soul, your better self has turned a wry face upon it. You may be unconscious of the change, but to all honest married people does this realization come sooner or later. Some unhappily married have the hardihood to forego the hour of awakening until the end of their earthly incarnation. But the revelation will come sometime, either in this life or some future life, rest assured."

"But do I understand that you would abrogate the marriage law?" Thorpe asked in surprise.

"Most assuredly not. I would preserve it as the divinest gift of a generous Maker. The trouble is, a large majority of our so-called married people have never been married at all."

A puzzled smile now stole upon Thorpe's face, into which was blended a mixture of belief and unbelief, such as might come upon the face of a child when told of some vast truth in astronomy. Yet how could he gainsay all this with his own meager knowledge of the world.

"This being the case," the Doctor resumed, "the unfortunate creatures go floundering about in the mire of error, false to each other, false to the world, and at last the soul of both the man and the woman sickens and longs to be rid of the body. Now, note the result. Sickness, that much overrated visitation from God, steals in. Home is a prison, and Love is dead — yes, dead—the only real, tangible death known in the universe. Kill Love, and you have indeed a most justifiable cause for bereavement."

While the speaker warmed to his subject, a gleaming light appeared in his dark, deep-set eyes. His listener seemed wrapt in a profound abstract forgetfulness, which he had never before experienced. He found it

profitable to permit his counselor's words to flow on uninterruptedly, for the time his visit should consume must necessarily be very limited. In several instances just as he was ready to ask a question his query would be answered, which went far to prove the extreme sensitized state of the speaker's mind. It seemed as if a spring of renewed life was welling up within Thorpe's inner soul. Was life, indeed, so valueless and full of somber light? From talks upon marriage the Doctor broached several kindred subjects, each full of truths which he had delved out of the rock of experience, out of a life of study and self-sacrifice, and embracing many phases altogether new to his listener.

It could hardly be expected that Thorpe could undergo a complete change of self in so brief a time, but as the Doctor proceeded he felt as if some marked period in his life had arrived. How sacred are the trusts given us, to be exercised toward one another. No man or woman stands wholly alone. All have moments of dependence. The

suffering soul reaches out and grasps at that which is within its reach. Then alone can the Good Samaritan touch with a healing power. A just Creator has given us all the divine commission, and we are but to use it justly, unselfishly.

In the midst of a pause in the Doctor's words a single stroke of some hidden gong fell upon the air. Its sound was sweet and peculiarly toned, and, coming as it did when Thorpe's spiritual nature was so fully aroused, it seemed to him more like a knell of approval, but doubtless it was only an announcement of some new arrival. Without further words the Doctor arose to dismiss his caller. As he reached forth his hand he said:

"Come again in one week, please; I have an important word to say to you. In the meantime, go into the recesses of thy inner soul and ask for guidance from Him who knows best in all things. Be patient, and new light will come to thee. Above all else, remember that the cure which every person is to find must come from within. A

teacher can only suggest, while you alone must work out that redemption to which you are entitled, according to your needs. That is what life is for—the finding of the inner temple; but it will never be found upon the lines of any one theory or set of theories promulgated by any sect, however broad it may be. Humankind is too diversified.”

Thorpe felt intensely comforted. “I thank you, sir,” he said, gratefully. But words seemed to belittle rather than express his fullest gratitude. So he went his way without further speech, except to bid the kind-hearted Doctor a simple farewell.

CHAPTER III.

ONE HOME OF MANY.

The sunlight of this most magnificent day filled the far west before Thorpe reached home. Never before did he turn the knob of his door with such peculiar sensations. His inmost joy would have been to gather his entire family together and treat them to one long embrace of thanksgiving, but how rude and unlooked-for would such an act seem in a household which had so long been silent and drooping in spiritual endearments. One of the last misfortunes which had befallen him was the loss of his situation in a wholesale mercantile concern. The great depression had set in, and according to the rules which govern trade, a curtailment of expenses was made necessary. When the shrewd tradesman looks over his

group of trusted employes, which one is he apt to part with first? Somehow the misfortune seems to fall upon him who can least afford to be idle—that person, perchance, whose home life has put an unconscious frown upon his face, from which people shrink, they know not why. The fountain of good-will—that generous, magnetic gift which belongs to a successful salesman—had begun to slip away from Thorpe's individuality, hence he had been one of the first to receive a dismissal. It is true that this is one of the unwelcome duties which the successful merchant is called upon to perform. Not that Thorpe could not have been trusted to most any limit of confidence, for he had always been known as a most reliable servant. No, the excuse given him was merely a lack of trade. The real cause his employer may not have been fully conscious of himself.

The marriage of Mr. and Mrs. Thorpe had been one of those everyday happenings which provides the newspaper paragrapher with a few lines of society news—pleasant words concerning the blissful happiness of

bride and groom, their many presents from loving friends, their respectful family connections, their contemplated bridal trip, their brilliant outlook as members of society, etc., etc., all most charmingly appropriate to the joyous event, for does not the intensely happy couple merit all these? Both Mr. and Mrs. Thorpe's parents had showered every blessing upon their children known to parental love. Gradually, but very gradually, were they realizing the truth that the real marriage had been but little sanctified even by an elaborate marriage ceremony. A pang of sorrow was slowly but surely stealing its way into their aged hearts. What possible help can come to such conditions as these? And yet the divorce mill grinds steadily on, increasing its output with every month of its existence. Indeed, it is with no willing hand that the writer of this draws the picture of the household into which Mr. Edward Thorpe went that summer afternoon.

The first pair of eyes which met his were those of his little four-year-old daughter.

Controlled by some peculiar insight of love, little Mabel stole a single look into her parent's face, and it took but this one glance to tell her that some new light sat pictured thereon. Impulsively she ran up and threw her arms about his neck and kissed his now trembling lips. It had been months since she had met him with such a show of affection. Alas, but could we all become children once more, with children's bountiful and forgiving hearts!

Mrs. Thorpe sat busy with some household duty, and may not have observed this simple act of her daughter's. She was a woman having a superior, conscientious nature, somewhat slow in her movements, a few wrinkles upon her ample forehead, while a look had overspread her once comely features which hinted at some inner nervous and wasteful pain. A wan look of indecision shone out of her eyes, doubtless often wet with weeping. When Thorpe took his seat at an open window, and had picked up a newspaper for the want of something else to do, he felt a strange conflict going on

within him. In one moment he was tempted to tell his wife all he had heard, but a single look at her unmoved face and he would lose heart, so he finally gave it up.

The house they occupied was a rather pretty cottage in the cleaner portion of South Chicago. They had once been among the leaders of their kind, and even now Mrs. Thorpe remained in touch with some of her earlier associates; but for some reason these personal attachments had one by one dropped away, until now she could count upon her fingers' tips her few intimate neighbors which it was yet her habit to call upon. As for Mr. Thorpe, he still maintained a speaking acquaintance with his male friends, a privilege seldom denied the man of business, no matter how unsuccessful he may have been.

What a week of probation was this for Mr. Thorpe! He must have appeared strangely ill at ease, for he had had revealed to him just enough of the inner life to bring him both pain and a series of exhilarating expectations. His nights were restless, and his

days were spent in a more than fruitless effort to understand the true mission of him who must walk the earth so in darkness as he was doing. When the light begins to break in upon us, its dazzling brilliancy is painful to the extreme. Whether man or angel, the good Doctor had helped to hasten some heroic change within him, and now that he understood so little, he longed for the week to roll around, that he might hear something more of his friend's mysterious sayings.

But during the entire seven days little came into the Thorpe household to change the lives of its inmates. The atmosphere of his home seemed to afford Thorpe still less encouragement. During the nights the babe cried out more frequently, as if it took on the burdening flight of time and the destroying effects of worn-out conditions. Have not our little ones often good excuses for leaving us? And yet they tell us it is the hand of the Lord that plucks the dear ones from our firesides.

This, dear reader, is a brief but truthful

picture of the home of Edward Thorpe and family as we find it. Have you not many such in your mind which you might give to me in exchange for this one?

CHAPTER IV.

MORE MYSTICAL TEACHINGS.

The times, instead of growing better, grew steadily worse, and many indeed were the theories advanced by tradesman and politician as to the cause of the great depression. Thus out of work, Thorpe could not expect to maintain himself and family long in their present comforts. This alone was sufficient to harass and perplex him.

When the day at last came for him to visit the Doctor, he watched eagerly for the hour to arrive, though when he questioned himself closely, he could not see just how the visit was to bring him any lasting relief. With these thoughts pressing in upon him, he again rang the bell and was admitted as before.

The Doctor's greeting was a most inspiring one. His eyes began searching those of

his caller, while a look of kindly forbearance wreathed his face in smiles.

"Ah, yes," he said, offering his friend a seat. "Been brooding again, I see. Well, infancy is and should be the first stage in human growth. Many of us are yet only mere infants, even after we attain to years of discretion," and a tone of gentle endearment dropped into the speaker's words. "Now," he said, "I am going to tell you a secret. You know nothing is so entrancing as to learn a secret."

Thorpe bowed his willing assent. He did not deem it wise to interpose a single remark of his own.

"Well, to begin with, we must know that there once lived upon the face of this earth a good and aged man, whom we will call The Great Unknown. This man was a seer who foretold many things, among them the errors which certain good people would become addicted to in their homes, after civilization became so refined that social errors must needs bring them worlds of suffering. He foretold the status of the modern mar-

riage. Since this good but very humble man lived and died, lodges for righting family inharmonies have been formed, only one of which exists in this entire country. It may be in the wilderness of New York, or it may be in some secret haunt in intellectual Boston, or even amid the busy clamor of our own city, or possibly in the Land of the Sunset; it makes little difference where it is. But I want to entrust the secret to you that I am a delegate sent out from this remote lodge, hence my work is almost wholly upon this line. Emissaries are being placed throughout the world constantly, made up mostly of those who have lived through the errors of wedlock, and have been purified thereby as naught else can purify them. In this holy temple is a vast mirror, which reflects before a prime Master the works of his servants. You are pictured to-day in the mirror in conversation with me. The aura I throw off for your benefit gives evidence of the regard I have for your welfare. The response in your soul can be easily seen in the mirror, too, and is

accurately recorded with other facts of your case. The name of this headquarters is The Temple of True Wedlock. Its object is correctly set forth in its name.

“Now, it has all been brought about that you, having already tasted the bitterness of a domestic decline, are to be lifted up and set to rights, if you so desire. But an entire revolution in the lives of yourself and mate is inevitable. Custom has taught you that the marriage ceremony gave each of you, one to the other, as a legal possession, a right which only the law can annul. When looked upon correctly, this is all well enough, but when perverted, much useless misery results. The Master of the Temple says, live separate, even in wedlock. Why, to the newly-married couple this is the rank-est nonsense. The young man and woman tell us they even got married to live together; then why live separately? The reason why can be stated in the fewest possible words. No one temperament is so enduring that it can stand a constant close companionship with another. Sooner or

later the weaker will droop, get sick, and perhaps meet death, all because of the one error handed down to us by people less refined than we. Every generation takes on a subtler aura of refinement, and as a result greater events in civilization come about, as well as more wonderful inventions; we travel faster, we live more hours to the day because of our intensely refined natures, hence the plodding, old-fashioned habits of our forefathers do not do us at this period at all."

Here the Doctor paused, as if to note the effect of his words. Any less troubled mind than Thorpe's might have failed to grasp the mystical side of this most remarkable story. To say that he was amazed would be putting it only mildly. He was more surprised, however, at the truths thus far broached, and which were so directly applicable to his own domestic life. Who could have spoken them better? He would liked to have gone out and got his sorrowful companion and dragged her before this sacred tribunal. Here she might learn

with him, perhaps, the secret of their unhappiness.

"Now, as to your case," said the Doctor, warmly. "You two were married and thought yourselves happy. You were happy, and had you made a more prudent use of life you might have been happy even now. As it was, you lived upon and devoured each other, until that first love has drooped and sickened. You sought in the gratification of earthly desires for the secret of that inner love you both felt but could not define. You delved still deeper, only to find that fanciful gem still eluding you. A feeling of loathing set in, and alarmed at this, you foreswore greater devotion to each other, but how vain was this, even, while you lived in error. To-day you are tasting the poison of worn-out conditions, actually brought about by your honest, lovable, united desires to be supremely happy. As a result, Self is now uppermost in all you think or do. Only occasionally, when, perchance, some act or saying of your child attracts your attention, do you throw off the

yoke of Self to catch a glimmer of the true life. Is this not so?"

Thorpe's eyes were by this time almost bursting with a fever of confession. How precisely had his good friend pictured the most secret and lamentable conditions of his home. While a feeling of deep gratitude came upon him, he could not guess what remedies were possible to cure the wrong.

Occasionally while speaking Thorpe observed that his teacher's eyes would wander to a small, dark concave mirror, which lay partly secreted upon the table before him. While looking at this he would remain silent as if in study. Then again a smile would break upon his features, and he would proceed as before.

"I see for you a mission, which, could you understand the happiness it is to bring you, would cause your heart to leap for joy. Let me tell you a word about yourself. Deep down in your generous soul is an ardent love for mankind. But the petty crosses of life have nearly smothered the flame, until

thoughts of the sufferings of others seldom occur to you. You are absorbed in the contemplation of your own misfortunes, until those about you are learning to shun you from instinct. Still, along with your awakening will come your opportunity to do some certain great good in the world, which will have little or no self in it. Then the windows of your soul shall be opened, indeed. Then will you wonder how the good within you has been dormant so long. Self, sir, is the destroyer of both individuals and nations. When the Christ spirit shall truly illumine the world, much of the suffering we now see about us will be swept away, and love and plenty reign in its stead. Marriage, for instance, will be a most blessed and life-long union. Through a study of the heavens, children will be born only at favored periods of the year, that the race may come to a high state of perfection. Instead of man and wife being a burden to each other, they will, by being self-sustaining, become mutual helpmeets and co-workers. Do you not see that there is a

harvest for him who receives the light to teach? Why, sir, the very air teems with the new life now bursting in upon the world. And not at all strange is it that this must find the warmest advocates in the home. Home, the most sacred place on earth; how fitting that the reform shall begin within its borders! Hence, I am moved to ask you, Mr. Thorpe, Are you ready and willing to receive this great light of redemption in our social life? Speak only after you have thought it earnestly over in your own soul, for like a great wheel is this vast work which is given us. Once we step aboard of it there is no turning back. If we do not cling to our places we are thrown off by the immense momentum, and then we are like lost souls, without place or purpose, and it were better had we never enlisted at all. Should you decide to enter upon the work, the way shall be opened to you."

Some strange power seemed to have taken possession of Thorpe's entire self. From out his inner being a spirit of intense thankfulness was rising, and this almost choked

his words. Man that he was, he could not so much as weep, yet the grief he felt was no less intense. His very soul seemed to be passing through some still but mighty transition. Was he indeed thus subject to the occult powers of the Doctor, or was his conscience, so long dormant, thus difficult to be aroused? Only by fixing his gaze upon the tranquil face of his teacher was he able to think at all. Like a sentry firmly stationed in the midst of dangers, did his learned friend seem to him. He was like a rock, calm and immovable.

Presently, and in the midst of a most enjoyable silence, came the same summons that cut their previous visit short; and now the lethargic feeling began slowly to fall from Thorpe's consciousness. Again he found himself standing by the Doctor's side, holding his warm, magnetic hand.

"God knows I need help," he said, wringing the hand with fervor. "You may think it premature for me to decide now, but with my Maker as my witness do I believe that I am ready to live the life. Command me, my

gentle sir, to do the bidding of Him who put me here. I am ready, even now."

"Very good," spoke the Doctor, with satisfaction. "Before we meet again, an event will take place which will be the first step toward your deliverance. Go forth into the world with a trustful, cheerful mien. Only the sullen are passed by unnoticed. Smile upon the world and it will smile upon you. Remember that this one brief life is but a mere link in an endless chain of lives; and to bend beneath an affliction now but proves your tendency to material things—things of earth which seem great only to little souls, but which are in fact often blessings in disguise. Act not from self, but from your interior love for mankind. Note carefully your many opportunities for doing good. These are our guidances toward salvation. When trials come, wait, and be silent. Much is lost by one word of impatience. The trustful spirit is a Samson in hours of great peril. Peace be with you."

Another warm handshake, and Thorpe turned and went his way without further word.

CHAPTER V.

A MERE INCIDENT.

The circumstance which was to come into Mr. Thorpe's life, as foretold by the Doctor, was destined soon to reveal itself. But like many other events of our commonplace existences, none could have recognized it as being the event itself. Human expectations do not run in ordinary grooves.

The third day after his call, Mrs. Thorpe surprised her husband by an announcement that their little Mabel was ill. Common to people in her condition, extreme fear had overtaken her. Her words were so full of apprehension that Thorpe instantly took on her feelings, and for one moment of suspense they were a unit in thought and action. A hot fever had already taken possession of the child, and this, with other un-

favorable symptoms, caused the stricken father to forget for a time all else.

"What shall we do?" asked Mrs. Thorpe. "We must have a doctor!" she said, her words coming rapidly and almost with vehemence.

At the thought of a doctor, a remembrance of his friend and teacher flashed upon Thorpe's mind. To send his wife to Doctor Wade for counsel seemed for the instant the most natural thing to do, and the thought of going himself did not so much as occur to him.

"Better go around and see Doctor Wade," he said. "I will give you his address." Suiting his action to the word he wrote the name and street number upon a paper and handed it to his wife. She was already putting on her things in ready obedience. "Tell him," were Thorpe's parting words, "that I am with her, and if he thinks best he can send some medicine. I would not hurry—I will watch here until you come back."

Thorpe was surprised at the tenderness with which he had spoken. Mutual trials

bring us very, very near the goal of a common communion. Even though the love they bore for their child may have been a selfish one, it was indeed an intense love, which they had fastened upon the little household messenger with all the strength of their united souls. This is particularly true of two erring parents, who have grown much apart by marital suffering. When love languishes for want of fuel to enkindle it, when it does burst forth it discloses both light and heat within its golden limit; else it would not be love.

When his wife had gone, Thorpe sat down beside his sleeping child, and took her little hand in his. A flood of intense grief and contrition sprang to his eyes, and in an instant a vision of his undeveloped self stood out before him. He could have flung himself at the feet of some kind confessor, and have told to him his every word of inner guilt. Must they of needs have sickness thrust upon them along with their other sorrows of the flesh?

Long he sat and pondered. Presently a

mysterious calmness crept slowly into his thoughts, and in answer to the sweet peacefulness of the moment he was encouraged to find small beads of moisture standing upon the child's forehead. Had the utter moments he had just passed through been a prayer, and had it been answered thus quickly? His knowledge of fevers told him his child was already better. But as the moments passed, he was surprised to find that his wife had been gone so long. It was now nearly an hour since she started. Quick as thought a mere hope came to him. Would not Doctor Wade improve the occasion to speak a word of counsel to her also? So great had been Thorpe's sufferings that he was becoming most intuitive. Instantly the hope took shape in a tangible belief that this was what had kept her. He could not even have planned a circumstance more favorable to bring about this very thing. Now his waiting became that of patience and thanksgiving. It was another half-hour before Mrs. Thorpe returned. When she entered the bedroom Thorpe looked question-

ingly up at her. Truly, much of the look of fear had left her. To add still more to her serenity Thorpe made haste to say:

"Mabel is better. See, she is sleeping more quietly, and the fever is nearly gone," and with a gentle hand the father wiped the perspiration from the child's pretty brow.

"The Doctor says we need feel no alarm. He was sure she would be much better when I returned."

Thorpe did not see the tears that had filled her eyes as she spoke. She had deftly turned about and had gone out of the room to remove her wraps. He did not see her shut herself in her closet and turn her face upward to a merciful Father, with a look of devout resignation resting upon her face. No, in a family unattuned to harmonious conditions these secret hidings are many, very many. And yet they each serve their purpose. In time Mrs. Thorpe had dried her tears and entered the bedroom just as Mabel awoke.

In an impulse of love she stooped and showered many kisses upon her child's ruby

lips. In response Mabel encircled her mother's neck with her childish arms, as if this was her one opportunity. To conceal his emotions, the father had gone out and left mother and child alone. He had even dared to believe he had seen a change in his wife's manner. Yet far indeed was he from speaking of the change to her. Remarks upon each other's personal appearance had long since become an obsolete practice with them.

So great had been the conflict within the home, that the deep mutterings of discontent among the world's unemployed had had little or no place in either Mr. or Mrs. Thorpe's minds. Not until his last visit to the Doctor had Thorpe understood the necessity of unselfish thoughts in behalf of others. With a willing response he looked about him and asked the all-important question, To whom among my fellow-men do I owe allegiance? He asked this question in all sincerity. As he had been told, he went forth with a smile of good cheer upon his face. His one quest was work. Yes, the

mere chance to serve a master—any master, however imperious or exacting—only so that the bread to sustain life might be earned for his family. It was at least a relief to know that he was not alone. Not only that, but thousands were many times worse off than he, many who were even now approaching the verge of starvation. Verily, it would be a delight to bring relief to such as they.

With these thoughts weighting his burdened soul, Thorpe was one afternoon walking down a neighboring street, wondering where next he might apply for work. In the midst of his musings a harrowing yell of pain broke upon his ear. *Looking around he saw a moving mass of infuriated men and boys, each intent upon venting their anger upon some object in their midst. Thorpe did not know when or how he became a part of the motley throng. The inspiration to save the life of some helpless mortal had blinded him to danger. Before he had reached the thickest of the crowd he discov-

*A fact.

ered what was going on. A blood-besattered, ragged man seemed struggling for his life to get away from merciless hands, each of which seemed bent upon his destruction. Fists came down upon the poor fellow's head and body with unceasing rapidity. At each lurch the man would break away, only to be headed off by another portion of the gang. And a dreadful-looking set of men they were. Scowling visages, angry oaths, and hideous threats to kill, as if each craved the privilege of being foremost in the terrible deed. Thorpe did not stop to reason. For a single instant self was wholly abandoned, and with a cat-like spring he leaped into the very midst of the crowd. A heavy brute was in the act of pounding the skull of the victim, while he stood astride his prostrate form. Quick as a flash Thorpe had grasped the fellow's collar and had jerked him over backward. This was his only deed of violence. It was indeed an inspiration. For a second a deep hush came upon the throng. All eyes glared at the intruder, who was the only well-dressed per-

son among them. Had he dropped out of the clouds they could not have been more astonished. With a simultaneous movement all drew back as if from superstitious awe. This was only for an instant, however. Even more speedily did Thorpe find himself jostled and fairly carried out of the crowd, not a member of which dared to strike him. But his timely act had saved the poor wretch's life, for during the brief parley he had managed to crawl out from among them and under a box car which stood upon the railroad track. With what strength he had left he had doubtless taken to his heels, and by this time was quite beyond reach of his foes.

A friendly hand touched Thorpe upon his shoulder.

"My dear man, do you know what you have done?" came the voice of a stranger, which sounded low and without a show of excitement.

Thorpe stood panting and trying to smooth out his clothing, which had become somewhat disarranged. The crowd was

by this time surging away down the railroad track in search of some new victim upon whom to vent its madness. A certain chord of sympathy had betrayed itself in the stranger's words.

"I presume I was rash, but how can a man with a soul stand by and see such fearful odds against a fellow mortal?" asserted Thorpe.

"You may not know," replied the voice, "that a mightier hand than yours accomplished the act. There was a flash of divine impulse in all you did. I do believe that had I been on the ground soon enough I could have done the same as you. As it is, my belief in a higher power is strengthened."

Thorpe could only grasp the speaker's hand in the warmest of fellowship. "Pardon me, sir," he said, "but you speak like one who has knowledge of the inner light. I must have been madly imprudent, I know, but you speak of a higher power having to do with it. How do you know that?"

The stranger looked his interrogator

steadily in the eye. "Because," he said, "I have studied human nature in both its material and spiritual aspects. I do not measure real power by the size of the muscles. There is a dynamic force behind every purely unselfish act which brute force can not cope with. It is only when Self steps in that this power vanishes."

These words were as balm to Thorpe's ears, though as the moments flew by he began to marvel at his truly dangerous onslaught upon this crowd of roughs. Why had they not turned upon him instead?

"I have your thought," again spoke the stranger, with a wise smile of understanding. "You wonder why the tide was turned so quickly. Well, to the sensuous eye of anger, does not a sudden alien presence, unlooked-for and truly alien, exert some force unknown to human reason? Why, the power of contrast is something. They are hoodlums, you are a gentleman. Had you borne a pick or spade upon your shoulder in search of work, and really not one of their number, you would have been their natural

enemy. These, sir, are the conditions which are apt to adorn the more terrible phases of a great railroad strike. The most destitute victim to starvation would not dare to work in the face of such a gang."

Thorpe was in the best of mind to drink in all the stranger said. It seemed to be his fate to run afoul of some mystical mind with more wisdom than he. There was an air almost of mystery about the man, he was so brief and remarkably ready in his speech. Had the conversation not terminated so suddenly he would gladly have questioned his sympathetic friend where such superior powers of divination were to be had.

"What are your circumstances?" asked the stranger, abruptly.

For the first time Thorpe remembered his own family want. "I am in the same condition as those poor misguided creatures down yonder, out of work. But would to God I could give every one of them work, even now."

"Would you care to call at my room at ten to-morrow? Possibly you may hear some-

thing to your advantage. Please do so, sir," added the speaker, forcing a card into Thorpe's hand. In another moment he had turned and left the spot. Quite speechless with amazement, Thorpe stood and watched his retreating figure. Intuitively he glanced down at the card. Upon it he found printed:

I. M. SERVETUS,
MEMBER OF THE
ROYAL LEGION OF JUSTICE,
ROOM — THE ROOKERY.

CHAPTER VI.

A QUICK REWARD.

"Well," reasoned Thorpe, taking up his walk once more down the street, "it seems a little singular, though I presume it's altogether as it should be, else it wouldn't have happened. Possibly the Doctor would call it foreordination; and yet—indeed, now, I wonder who this smooth-spoken Samaritan can be, who wants me to call at his room in the Rookery. Just as I am at this moment it wouldn't take much to establish my belief in the supernatural. Here upon a public highway drops around a human soul who can read one's very thoughts. I supposed the Doctor had an option upon all that. And his words, too, have a flavor of genuine sympathy in them. I will call, I guess, and look him over. Anything to fill up these idle hours."

Thorpe was further surprised to find that the act he had just performed had been done without the heat of passion, for he now felt most serene and undisturbed. He believed he was equal to another bout with the lower elements if occasion required it.

Through the aid of some mysterious curative, little Mabel of the Thorpe household recovered quickly from the fever which threatened her. With careful nursing she would soon be around again as usual. This gave Thorpe the fullest liberty to continue his daily rounds in search of work. Promptly at the appointed hour he entered one of the magnificent elevators in the Rookery, and was quickly whirled skyward toward the room of his unknown friend. When he found the number of the room, no sign confronted him, so he knocked, in answer to which the door swung noiselessly open. Before him stood the dignified stranger of the day before.

"Glad to see you," was his brief salute. "Your name, please?" Thorpe handed out his card.

"Mr. Thorpe, make you acquainted with Mr. Adolphus Hedger, of the firm of Hedger & Co."

Thorpe advanced and took the hand of Mr. Hedger. The latter seemed a little lofty in his bearing, but while he was doubtless a man of considerable importance, there was a firm-set, resolute look of kindness in his deep-blue eyes, which told volumes to the student of human nature. He rested his gaze upon Thorpe for a full moment, then said condescendingly:

"Mr. Servetus tells me you are in need of employment."

Thorpe replied in the affirmative. "I am aware that I am not alone upon the list of unemployed," he said, with a smile of frankness which put him above that class of men who court habitual idleness.

"Well," spoke Mr. Hedger, briefly, "I think we have a place for you. Please call at our store at twelve to-morrow and we will try and arrange details. Here is our card," and with a businesslike air he placed the bit of pasteboard in Thorpe's hand. Then

he arose and took up his hat and cane. "You will need to excuse me, gentlemen; I have an important engagement up the street," he said, quite hurriedly, and turning to go out.

"I thank you deeply, Mr. Hedger——" began Thorpe.

"No, no; please don't," protested Hedger, and in another moment the door had closed behind him.

"I congratulate you, Mr. Thorpe," said Mr. Servetus, turning to his visitor. "The house of Hedger & Co. has a reputation of employing only the best of help. Hedger himself is a splendid judge of human nature, and seldom misses his mark."

"But how can I repay you for this kindness?" pleaded Thorpe, humbly.

"You do not need to mention it, my dear sir. Some day you will be one of us, and then you will know why and how all this has come about. In the meantime, I can only say this: The Royal Legion of Justice is ever with him who has chosen the path. You have already done so, and this is to be your first fitting reward. From this time

on, never flinch one iota when you can help a fellow mortal. Our watchword is benevolence, and our field the world. Some day all mankind will have become one vast Universal Brotherhood, and then our work will cease, and not till then. Your every deed of kindness, though it may not at once meet with a seeming reward, you will find sometime registered to your credit. None of our Order work for reward. In this act to-day I have only done the bidding of the Brotherhood. The sooner I forget the deed the better. Now, sir, I will need to bid you a good-morning. I, too, have an appointment which I must not miss. I shall be glad to have you call again," saying which the speaker reached forth a warm hand to his almost speechless caller.

A feeling that to further urge an expression of his gratitude would be discourteous came upon Thorpe, so with a quiet manner he shook his friend's hand, and dropping a mere word of farewell turned to go out. A complete realization of his improved prospects had not yet come to him. When the

fast-flying elevator lowered him to the street, a whirl of new thoughts began filling his mind.

"And now for home," he said, and what a charming significance was contained in this one incomparable word. In no event would he lose any time in making known his good fortune to his wife. Suddenly he remembered that this was the day he was to visit the Doctor. So with a still greater eagerness did he board an outgoing car for the South End, resolved upon seeing his friend and teacher before his lunch hour.

But it was nearly noon when he rang the Doctor's door-bell. A look of supreme animation must have rested upon his face, for the Doctor's features also lighted up with a most genial smile as he beheld his visitor.

"Already your light is burning with a steadier flame," he said. "Please be seated and we will study the situation a little more critically."

"But I first want you to know of my good fortune," expostulated Thorpe, lest he might not have a chance to anticipate the

Doctor's offhand reading of events. Then in a brief way he told of some of the things which had happened to his advantage.

"Now, sir, please let us apply the lesson right here before it is forgotten," responded the Doctor. "For the first time in your life you have so far risen above Self, that you have actually been in touch with the higher life. Your soul saw the danger the poor wretch was in, while the outer man slept. Great emergencies bring forth great acts, especially from him who is living the life. As I told you recently, you have a latent, a magnificent love for mankind, and this is one of the proofs of it. This very love must work your redemption. Can anything be more encouraging? Why, great and good men and women have crowded two lives into one by constantly polarizing toward some noble end. It may have been some hero in humble life who was not appreciated until centuries after he lived, for it takes the world many years to lift the veil that enshrouds a real hero."

Thorpe bowed his ready understanding, but said not a word.

"The branch of our Order to which your friend belongs is well known to me. The Royal Legion of Justice is one of the oldest and most efficient aids we have. Because of its existence, thousands of wrongs have been righted, quickly, surely, and without appeal to the public ear. It is an order not wholly in the interest of the lower classes, but as you have observed in this man Hedger, the most successful business men are members of it. Once let a man like Hedger neglect his duty toward others, and his power of concentration quickly leaves him, which must result in his ultimate failure. It has been shown to me that the most successful business men of the day are those who have foresworn themselves to obey the mandates of the Secret Brotherhood."

"Now, as to the work we have begun together. I see the clouds parting and a glimmer of sunlight is already stealing its way into your home. Tremblingly it falls upon the altar of your early love, as if it were a

stranger and dare not look for welcome. But it is coming to stay, if you but listen to the voice from within. From this hour you will do well to begin a new life. Ownership of one another must cease. When asleep, occupy separate couches, for then if ever is the physical body negative. When it is negative, the stronger organism saps the vitality of the weaker. It is more often the woman who suffers first. Her delicate nature, refined and sensitive, is quick to feel the nearness of the stronger magnetism of her husband. The man goes forth into the world, gathers new life, and grows strong physically. The wife, busy with her household, lives over and over the routine of her duties, until of necessity she droops and fades. In the silent watches of the night she must needs cry out for sleep, which comes not to her nervous, overtaxed body. Her life becomes a mere excuse for living. She does not live, but waits, perhaps unconsciously, for her hour of deliverance. As you walk the streets to-day, note the deep lines, the forced smiles, the looks of secreted

pain hidden in the faces of our world's women, as they go rummaging for novelties from store to store, or vainly seek some new amusement, or some new and novel religion if you please, to satisfy the cravings of their longing souls. Look upon these faces, I say, and can you wonder at the crowded condition of our insane asylums?

"To help right all this is the mission of the Temple of True Wedlock. Marriage must become the holy of holies, according to the intent of our Maker. For, before marriage, how sweet to behold those two lovers, young, buoyant, full of hope, of individual selfhood, and possessing each his or her own talents and purposes—how sweet, I say, to behold these worthy examples of Nature's own handiwork. When joined together what is the result? The pale face, the languid, purposeless air of early wedlock does not tell the whole story. The wife, perhaps, who, before marriage, sang sweetly, who charmed her friends with her vivacious, ever-lovable presence, has but to hide her secret pain of distrust of herself, and take

refuge in mere devotion to her husband. Though the farce of appearances can be kept up for a while, a hollowness steals at last into the gifted singer's voice, and the dull phantom of remorse into the words of the former ardent husband and lover. Love has been sacrificed upon the altar of error. A sin has been committed. Children are born—for shame that these little defenseless creatures should be forced to suffer with us. But it is a fact that they do suffer more than we know."

The Doctor was growing eloquent. Thorpe followed the lines of his argument with all the ardor of his awakening self. But these last words revealed a truly serious side to his own case, if all that he had heard were true. As each new lesson of life unfolds itself to us, its exactions, however plausible, bid us pause. To undo what custom has taught us is not a task of the moment. How strange, that at each new halting-place we stop, look within, and lo, we discover we are all wrong. Our boasted virtues, our theories, our habits, even, which

before seemed wise, are not at all adapted to the hour. Yet this is even so, else how could we progress at all? Sorrow is the lot of him whose life is perfect.

"But why is all this?" questioned Thorpe, as the Doctor paused a moment. "Why are we put upon a planet thus prone to error?"

"This has been the query of the sages of every generation. That it is a fact we must admit. When we violate a natural law, we suffer. Put those two axioms together, and we evolve a truth. If the objective self is dictator, the inner or subjective self must wait. A wise Ruler has given us the most spiritual as well as the most material minds to surround us. The former explore the inner temple, the latter seek mammon, and yet neither reach the goal of all knowledge. Faith in what is can alone solve the problem. We do not dare exact from our Maker more than we deserve. This is the law of compensation.

"However, I do not think it best to carry our lesson to-day too far into the metaphysical. I have given you the serious side of the

erroneous marriage system, now let me lift the somber veil and take a more hopeful view of the future. There is deliverance for us all. The marriage to come will not be made or annulled by the statutes. The mere legal ceremony, solemnizing a previous spiritual union, is not to be discarded, but such a ceremony will be an infraction of the law if true love be not the bond which has previously united the destinies of man and wife. We shall be so refined that to live in error we cannot. Then a race like that never yet known will spring up, and all the earth will breathe forth one prolonged murmur of thanksgiving. Even the shrine in our Temple of True Wedlock will be cast out as having served its purpose.

"There, we will go no farther to-day, but next time I shall treat you to some teachings of the Mystical Brotherhood, if—" here the Doctor put up a warning finger—"if you still desire to live the life. Let not the good fortune of to-day blind you to the necessities of to-morrow. And while I think of it, if you succeed in your calling, or if you

reach to any desired height, be wary and do not try to pull the ladder up after you. There are others behind you, toiling as you may have done at first, to get even so much as a start. Peace be with you."

CHAPTER VII.

BREAKING THE NEWS.

To farther delay Thorpe's arrival home, who should he overtake on his way but his good-natured friend and neighbor, Robert Fletcher, to whom, of course, he owed the utmost allegiance.

"Did I see the Doctor? Well, my inquisitive friend, I have seen the Doctor, certainly. You must have been inspired, I am sure."

"Yes, but——"

"Oh, to be inspired is to do some kind act without knowing it. Your one word of counsel has worked no end of change in my destiny."

"Come, now, old man, please do not generalize, but give me the facts. The inspiration must have been on your side, to have caused you to commit the fortunate act."

Fletcher had never seen his slow-going neighbor so animated. As the latter proceeded to relate a mere skeleton of his experiences, Robert grew deeply interested.

"That is good," he said, approvingly. "And now the skies are growing brighter, of course."

"There is a rift in the clouds, at least," admitted Thorpe. "But please let me return what humble thanks I can command for your suggestion. May your skies never grow dark, as mine have done—never, never," he repeated, as though the thought gave him some inner satisfaction.

When the two men parted, their united minds had achieved to a point of a mutual delight, though Robert for want of time deferred telling about his own experiences with Doctor Wade. These, however, he might never care to divulge.

Reaching home at last, Thorpe walked in and looked around. No face of greeting met his at first, so he sauntered from room to room until he reached the rear of the house. At the right of the meager dooryard was a

small patch of flowers. Here he discovered his connubial partner in person. However dull is life to the wife and mother, sad thoughts and fancies can be many times thrown off where flowers grow and have their being. It is a respite the true lover of Nature is never ready to part with, even in the face of adversity. Mrs. Thorpe was bending over a pretty bed of violets, with a watering-pot in her hand. So absorbed was she that she had not observed the presence of her husband. A subtle flow of silent language, of comforting worship one might call it, seemed to ply between the dainty violets and their devoted attendant. In a glance Thorpe took in the pretty scene, and it only intensified his happiness. He felt almost tempted to commit some sudden indiscretion. What might it be? Coming stealthily up behind his spouse he first grasped her about the waist, then attempted to implant a kiss upon her lips. But a very awkward mess he made of it, really. Mrs. Thorpe, so rudely awakened from her quiet day-dream, dropped the watering-pot, and its contents

went splashing over her dress and shoes, while the kiss, misdirected, of course, was planted upon her nose instead of her lips.

Confusion reigned for the moment, and Thorpe was helpless in his attempt to explain. Had he mistaken his wife for someone else, his act might have been partially excusable; but for him to be caught kissing his own wife—well, Mrs. Thorpe had every reason to be perplexed at the catastrophe which had come upon her. She at first turned red in the face, as if there was scarcely a way out of the dilemma, while Thorpe, instantly sorry for her wet dress and shoes, began stammering his regrets.

"I guess I was a little hasty," he said, humbly; "only I had so much to tell you of what has happened."

Mrs. Thorpe summoned courage to look into her husband's face. She at once surmised that good fortune had come to them.

"Well, I guess there is no harm done," she said, gathering up the folds of her dripping gown. "I don't know just why I should have dropped the watering-pot. You were rude,"

she added a little severely, as if it were **not** too late even now to enter a mild protest.

Thorpe followed her up the steps and into the house with an evidence of guilt in his looks. He truly regretted the unfortunate affair. He could at least have waited until a more propitious moment, for it was not his way to force his affections upon anyone, not even upon members of his own household. He believed he was already severely punished for the indiscretion, to say the least.

This little episode, it may be imagined, took much of the luster out of Thorpe's narrative to his wife, who was now busy changing her dress and shoes. Just as he began his story the babe awoke and gave forth its wail of hungry distress. With but one shoe on Mrs. Thorpe lifted the infant and began ministering to its wants.

"Go on," she said, "I'm listening."

Thorpe had been forced to await hostilities on the part of his babe. Events do not always quite match into each other in domestic life. Another difficulty appeared

when little Mabel came tauntingly in with a stuffy doll she had found in the yard, and craved immediate attention. Thorpe took her upon his knee to pacify her, and thus happily surrounded he finally succeeded in telling his story.

When reduced to a practical test it was not so much of a narrative after all. Suppose that he did not suit the firm of Hedger & Co., and since he was obliged to leave out all the Doctor had told him, which, because of its want of adaptability to common life, could not be told, Thorpe willfully concluded that he had indeed committed an indelicacy in so summarily offering to kiss his wife. It would be one while before he would be caught again.

Neither could Thorpe relate the mystical side of Mr. Servetus' remarks after his experience with the crowd of roughs. These, too, seemed to have no place in the pale of domestic economy, such as had been customary in this particular home. So, beyond the very practical and commonplace hope that he might indeed secure the place to

work, the events of the past two days had only a mere tinge of the unusual in them.

Hence it was with no slight feeling of concern that Thorpe presented himself at the private desk of Mr. Adolphus Hedger. He was prompt to the minute, and Mr. Hedger was ready to receive him. In his native sphere the merchant was genial and kindly spoken. His handshake was warm and condescending.

"Please sit down, Mr. Thorpe," he said, motioning toward a chair. "Pleasant day, but cool. You have no doubt overlooked my brevity of yesterday. I trust you have, sir. Business men are constantly cutting off the corners to make both ends meet. But, to state the truth plainly, my mind was about made up before I met you. The place stood waiting for the man. Only three days since the superintendent of this department left us, and our general superintendent has been doing double duty."

"I shall endeavor to meet your expectations," remarked Thorpe, with courtesy.

"Even now I must be brief," added Mr. Hedger, giving little heed to Thorpe's remark. "First of all, you will be called upon to respect the all-important law of silence. Many clerks will be under you who talk to sell goods. Their trade is to put the best side out without misrepresentation. You are to have supervision over these employes. The place demands quick but firm decisions. Your native readiness to act, and act perhaps intuitively, commends itself to me. By the golden law of silence one man can command a regiment. Never answer a quick retort. The loss of a moment's temper will undo the upbuildings of months. Preserve your odylie force, sir, for this is the secret of real power. The garrulous person scatters his energy in words; you are to gather energy by silence. Do not talk to court popularity. The silence of the mystic carries conviction to the masses of men. Be firm, but temper your words with justice. In a dispute, consult the inner self, and never argue a point, but wait. The solution comes after a brief moment of silence. The blus-

tering of a patron of this house is favorable to him who does not bluster, but waits. Once having talked off his ill-nature, that same person will admit he is wrong, and that you are right. But meet him with his own cudgel of haste, and he will take mortal offense. Rightly treated, he will come again. The world admires the successful man or woman. The fellow out at the elbows stands on the street corners and tells to everybody his woes. With a little prudent silence a place might open to him. There are always vacancies on top to be filled. I do not need to mention the one virtue of honesty. The law of Use demands this perforce. A truly honorable man can but cultivate truthfulness among those around him. Do you catch the drift of all this?" and Hedger cast a searching look into the open orbs of his listener.

"I think I do," replied Thorpe, understandingly. This mere response seemed to please Hedger's love of brevity. He touched a button, and very soon after a tall, studious-looking gentleman entered the office.

"This is Mr. Templeton, the junior member of our firm." Thorpe arose and took Mr. Templeton by the hand. "Mr. Thorpe," explained Hedger, "has been engaged to take charge of Department C. Will you please explain his duties farther to him? When you have settled the question of salary, please report to me," and with this Hedger turned again to his letters.

Thorpe could not well have described his emotions of the moment. It seemed as if he had been set adrift upon some mysterious current of good fortune, from which there was no turning back. He followed Mr. Templeton down past the numberless rows of well-filled counters, behind which every imaginable type of clerks was at work. This house of Hedger & Co. was indeed a vast aggregation of business clockwork. The scurrying tread of package-bearers, the sweet, lisping words of the attractive saleswoman, coupled with the deep bass of the consequential male employe, who, by his starched bosom and diamond pin one might mistake for the proprietor—these and much

besides gave Thorpe readily to understand the responsibilities he was taking on. Fortunately this was the line of trade in which he had been educated, so he would find himself anything but a stranger to the work.

At last they arrived at the general superintendent's office. Here they found no one present, and seating himself beside Mr. Templeton, Thorpe ventured to say:

"Mr. Hedger's confidence in his own judgment is surprising."

Templeton smiled a little, and replied: "When Hedger misses fire it will be time to unload. He seems to possess a secret of the trade which is denied to common men. His success in life has been phenomenal."

After a few further words upon this topic, Thorpe was given a fuller dissertation upon the business requirements of Hedger & Co., and the amount of salary the position would command. Ordinarily a stranger who had not worked his way up from some underposition with this house would command less; as it was, a very creditable amount was offered Thorpe to begin with. Later on

Mr. Templeton took his subordinate out among those who were to be under him, and made him acquainted. It might be several days before he would be competent to assume entire control of his department, but when night came he flattered himself upon having made a most satisfactory beginning.

* * * * *

During these same hours, and though it may have seemed only a mere circumstance, Thorpe was little aware of the one suggestive act of his wife. Her children left for a time with the next-door neighbor, she had coined the plausible excuse to go and see the Doctor—well—to consult him upon the baby's teething, perhaps, as much as anything. This was the time set for her second visit to her most noted friend and counselor, who, in all truth, she was yet to look upon as a type of the Doctor of the future—not a mere dealer in drugs, but a lover of humanity—a man of soul as well as science.

But let us not intrude upon the privacy of the Doctor and his patient, except to wit-

ness their parting. A fire of intense love and tolerance was burning in his eyes.

"And now, gentle lady, your work has commenced. The health of soul and body must go together. When you seek for these, look within. The ailing world reaches out its palsied hands and begs for health. The deluded victims of error would climb mountains, if needs be, to seek a mere drug, when the one potent remedy lies within them. To look without is a waste of energy; to seek within is the conservator of strength. In your own home new life will soon enter, and warm every heart within it. Be prayerful, be guarded, and self-sustaining. Your trials are but to test your merits as an initiate into the higher life. Live above self, and shun the gossip of the world. Pass unnoticed the faults of others. Live the simple life a wise Maker commands you to live, and soon, very soon, will a new world dawn upon you. Take of your husband's love, but take it sparingly. Life is not a bower of sensuous enjoyments. The

only lasting joy is to do for others. Up-build the broken fabrics of your home with all these daily observances, and peace will come to thee anon. God bless you all."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MAGIC MIRRORS.

Indeed, the destinies of the Thorpe household might well be said to have mended perceptibly. There comes a time in life when a lesson is needed. Not until then will it do us any good. Attempt to force a truth, however just, upon a thoughtless world, and you have toiled in vain; but when the sick at heart, the tired, hapless victims to popular errors have suffered enough, then can you reach them. It is for this half of the human family that the framework of this narrative is reared. Later on some abler hand will pen the story over again.

Mrs. Thorpe went home that day in a dream of new vision. A pain of hesitancy entered her soul. Could her husband but know of these things with her! How vain, she thought, to begin the new life alone.

What might he think of her should she take up an individual existence, when the law had made them one. Live separately? How strange and contradictory to all past traditions; and yet, could the one habit but be theirs, she almost dared to believe it best. But Mrs. Thorpe stood not alone. Should a tenth of the wives of men even broach a departure like this, their jealous lords would rave like madmen. The seal of ownership would be flaunted in their faces, and a man-made law would be invoked to warn them never again to hint at such a thing. To be sure, there are cases where the self-assertive presence of the wife has become the absorbent, and the husband, weak in his opinions, and subject to the will of his spouse, tumbles at last into a premature grave. Please observe these facts, dear reader, and learn for yourself. The world will provide you with plenty of instances upon which you can reflect profitably.

Night came, and with it the evening paper bedecked with monster headlines, telling of

the awful riots going on in the very neighborhood. The militia were parading the streets, and the timid pedestrian went blocks out of his way to avoid danger. Yet all these tidings of organic trouble had little effect upon Mrs. Thorpe's meditations. A series of deep musings was going on in her mother-heart. How she longed to fling her arms about her good husband's neck and cry out for mercy. Was it not he who went forth into the world to earn the bread of life? Had she done her whole duty in permitting the love she pledged him at the altar to grow cold? Alas, for the distance existing between two souls so near as theirs! Little queernesses had dropped in between them, trifles of neglect, petty thoughts of jealousy, and a thousand other things to shut the door of confidence. Each had been silent, when a word of involuntary endearment would have cleared the atmosphere of every shadow—all because the law-abiding association of one with the other had been too constant and exacting. The loveliest household will droop under the bans of

slavery—yes, that domestic slavery which civilization is only just beginning to understand.

Tea-time upon this eventful day was an occasion of itself. Aided by her rare intuitive insight, Mrs. Thorpe had set about to make the home pleasant when her husband should return. A certain favorite gown he had once told her he admired, but long since laid aside, a rosebud pinned at her throat, a daintily arranged table with two vases of flowers, and a clean snow-white spread to set off the newly scoured cutlery, and the china used "only for company"—a few of these innocent touches of awakening love, and like magic a home of burdening conditions was changed into a pretty little paradise. The children even seemed to breathe the invigorating atmosphere, and were in the best of humor. Mrs. Thorpe had not so much as doubted that her husband had secured the position to work. How subtle are these little evidences of intuitive knowledge.

When Mr. Thorpe at last opened the door and beheld the light within, a smile of content overspread his features. The welcoming kiss was not forced, but voluntary. Little Mabel put forth her chubby fists in eager welcome, while the baby, even, cooed with the happy pertness of babyhood.

But let us not remain long as witnesses of all this, but draw the curtain upon the scene too sacred for curious eyes. The barriers were indeed broken, for that night, when the children slept, Mrs. Thorpe, with tears of joy, poured forth her every word of confession. From an unlooked-for source had she received new light. Only one thing remained, and that was the fullest indorsement for what she had done. She could have beseeched her husband's approval of her having thus secretly visited the Doctor, but it was not necessary. With a flood of thanksgiving Thorpe drew his still loving wife to him, and in turn confessed his own clandestine visits to this same oracle of wisdom. How plainly did the Divine hand show in this work of love.

One week of domestic enjoyment went quickly by. Though a regiment of soldiery, with beating drums and measured tread, had twice passed her door, Mrs. Thorpe did not fear. She had exchanged the word love for fear. It was love that fortified the martyrs of old. *Hæro cometh not to him or her who basks in love.*

One afternoon a messenger brought a note to the door. It was addressed to both Mr. and Mrs. Thorpe, and read: "Come to-night at eight. The Brotherhood hath full knowledge of thy awakening. Come in twain, for the seal of a new marriage is awaiting thee. Your friend and well wisher."

This needed no elaborate explanation. One of the betterments of the household had been the employment of a domestic, which could now be afforded. With her could the children be trusted. Now in the fullest enjoyment of a united confidence could the husband and wife go forth together. And why should they not follow up the thread

of their late discoveries by still farther research into the unknown.

Upon this occasion the Doctor's visitors were taken into another and larger room, where a hush of some subtle and sacred presence seemed imminent. The Doctor, clad in a deeply colored dressing-gown and richly embroidered slippers, arose and silently took the hands of each. At his side was his wife, who also cordially seated the guests, though not a word was spoken.

The room, unlike anything Thorpe had ever seen before, was deeply draped with oriental hangings, while a richly colored light was burning with a low, mysterious flame in front of two dark, shadowless concave mirrors. Seats were provided for the visitors in a position where they could command a full view of the mirrors. After a few moments of silence, a note of sweet music stole in upon the air, which seemed to deepen the impressiveness of the scene. When this ceased the tinkling of an invisible bell gave the signal for meditation. Presently the Doctor spoke, slowly at first,

and with a deep, rich mellowness in his voice.

“My children, the hand of Him who doeth all things well hath beckoned you back to life once more. How frail the mask that hath hidden you from Truth. It is the promised deliverance—it is the baptism of love, that rightful, undisputed boon of man and wife, when they have aroused themselves out of the stupor of inanition. To-night you shall go forth from here fully consecrated to the new and holy life. It has been ordered that I shall pronounce the benediction, the mystic ceremony, if you please, that shall make you man and wife indeed. Please arise.”

With one accord the visitors arose and stood with bowed heads and hands clasped together. Both the Doctor and his wife came and stood before them. An invisible but lowly-attuned gong broke upon the silence, then a strain of the most entrancing music, after which another deep hush of silence. Raising his eyes to heaven, the Doctor lifted his right hand, slowly and

devoutly. Then the words of the benediction came forth in solemn accents:

“May the love of an all-wise Father bind your hearts in one accord of purpose and fealty to a better life. May the hand of Destiny destroy you not, but lead thee to a deeper regard for erring mankind, for the downtrodden and the suffering. Oh, breathe thou, Eternal One, new wisdom into the souls of these two beings, who have pledged themselves anew to live the life of sacrifice and purpose. In the name of a merciful Fatherhood, of a Motherhood of wisdom and compassion, do I at this hour pronounce you man and wife to the end of your days on earth. When you shall have fulfilled your pledge of heart, of body and of spirit, may the curtains of heaven open and let you in. I am done. Peace be with you forever and ever. Amen.”

A hush of an instant—a sigh of fervent love from him who had just spoken—then began a mere hint of sacred music, as of some far-away chanting of many voices. The very atmosphere seemed pregnant with

holy presences. On every face a divine light was shining, and continued to grow more tense as the music sounded louder and more melodious. When the strains at last died away, Thorpe's eyes met those of his wife. It was his one glance of a lifetime. What a world of perfect confidence, of renewing life and love, passed that instant between them. Every word seemed to have been rightly fitted to their deepest and most devout needs.

Presently they resumed their seats, and awaited further proceedings. By this time they both felt strangely unreal, as if they had left the mundane life and had entered an ideal existence. When the Doctor spoke again, it was with words of less religious feeling.

"Now, my friends, that you have progressed thus far, it is no more than just that you should be shown some ideal pictures of the life which surrounds us. Please look steadily into the mirrors, and do not be impatient if nothing reveals itself. When the music ceases, there may be figures shown

you, which you will do well to scrutinize very minutely. Concentrate your thoughts on the most high and noble things, and speak not a word. Now, prepare."

Presently the sweetest warblings of music, of an entirely different kind, seemed to pervade the very atmosphere, and began lowly at first, then it was wafted into fuller notes, again and again, until at last it sank slowly out of hearing. It was a moment of sublimest interest. Thoughts almost seemed words. The silence was livid with mystic presences, which must have been visible to the Doctor, for he frequently nodded and smiled as if in friendly recognition of some outside personalities.

In time whirling shadows of light and thin vapor began moving over the face of the mirrors. It was chaos to the untrained eye, but after several minutes of this, tangible forms of moving persons began to appear. When a complete scene stood out before them, the Doctor said:

"First you are to be shown the real cause of the domestic misery of our land. In the

right mirror has appeared a representation of the demon Self."

At this juncture a portly monster, half beast and half man, stalked forward and threw himself upon a couch of ease. His eyes were bleared with earthly indulgences, and his face was burning with passion.

"To gratify his desires," continued the Doctor, "he reaches out and feasts upon everything about him. Even the plants and flowers about the monster wither and droop. See, he suns himself as if only his sensuous wants are to be ministered unto. This is the Self that hangs the skeleton in our closets, and tempts us to jealous words and acts.

"Now please note the opposite of this. In the left-hand mirror you see coming forward a beautiful spirit in the form of a learned adept. See the peace upon his face, the longing desire, as it were, to call all mankind to him and bid it be well and happy. Forgetful of self, the lines of care have all left his aged brow. He seems filled with the love of sacrifice. When the demon of

Self is driven out of the household, this sainted creature comes into it, and sheds the light of love and happiness. I do not mean that he comes literally to us, but the aura of his presence, or the presence of some other perfected soul, is sure to visit us in our hours of peace. These are not altogether ideal pictures. They are in fact most real and emblematic of human tendencies."

With their gaze now fully absorbed, Mr. and Mrs. Thorpe beheld the pictures, and instantly applied the lesson. After this the scenes slowly faded, and the mirrors were dark again.

But soon again the clouds began floating about, and in time another picture slowly appeared, and soon forms of persons were distinctly visible. At last there appeared a room which seemed full of people.

"This," said the Doctor, "is a modern court-room, and taken as a whole, is a scene bordering upon the ridiculous. On the right sits a man who, he pleads, has had his affections trifled with. That guilty-looking miscreant in the other corner of the

room has alienated the affections of his wife, he says, and he goes to law to get satisfaction. Both judge and jury, it can be seen, are disgusted with the state of affairs being brought out by the trial. The judge is reading his charge to the jury. Listen to it: 'Whose fault is it that this man's wife should love another man? Is it the fault of the wife? No. Is it the stupidity of the husband? Possibly it is, but why does the woman deign to love another, and why is the husband stupid? Yonder wooer of female hearts can not say why this woman is so susceptible to clandestine love. He merely finds her heart longing for legitimate love, and denied this, she takes the next best thing, with the accompanying dishonor thrown in, and so you have a scandal in your midst which savors of the devil. Possibly the law is not binding enough. Yea, we have too much law and too little common sense. In olden times, before divorces were popular, people married for love; to-day they marry for the novelty of some new bondage. The yoke galls them, and they

throw it off as a child discards a broken toy. I charge you, gentlemen of the jury, that if this man has lost the affections of his wife, the loss is not to be measured by money damages. Go deeper into the truths of wedlock, and you will find a petty slavery there far beyond human endurance. The remedy is wanting. No man or woman is wise enough to fathom the real trouble of an unfortunate marriage. You blame the man, you blame the woman. Neither are to blame. Custom has told them how to live, and Custom is in error. In all conscience, the unfaithfulness of man and wife has no place in a court of law. Better relegate it to the excruciating realms of conscience. The plaintiff is without recourse, except to mend his broken heart with the added misery of a second marriage—if he should ever procure a divorce. Your verdict shall be, no cause of action.’”

None present in the room could have told just how they heard these words; not with their physical ears, surely. But with unerring accuracy was each syllable impressed

upon their minds, and now that the voice of the judge had ceased, only the picture remained. The faces in the court-room were a study, and most striking witnesses to the correctness of the argument just put forth. The crestfallen look upon the plaintiff's visage, the selfish, if not sensual, triumph upon the face of the seducer, and the non-plussed manners of the twelve jurymen, all helped to add significance to the scene.

"Here," said the Doctor, "we have one of the seeming contradictions of a modern court. Even the law, into whose tentacles men fly in a passion, is helpless to intervene in a case like this. It can grant divorces, but it cannot so much as enforce a single happy marriage. This has been shown us to prove that the remedy is not in the law, but in the observance of the law. What law? Why, the law of heaven; not the wrangling, passion-making law dispensed in our courts of so-called justice, which in fact do not evolve a jot or tittle of the real trouble.

"Now please look into the other mirror. Already you see appearing there the outlines of two pretty doves—mates, possibly, each obeying the commands of its inner or spiritual selfhood. What are they doing? Why, they are lovers, altogether outside the pale of what we term human justice. That is all. To cease to love never enters their hearts. Marriage goes on the same as with the human family, and their young are brought forth according to divine law. Instinctively they know they have wings, and if they should cease to love they can fly away. This measure of freedom keeps them together. As a consequence they have not committed a single sin, hence they are on good terms with their better selves. You ask who taught the doves such remarkable prudence. They were not taught, at least not by the human examples about them. The feathered race, the most devoted lovers living, are also the most devoted helpmeets, and the cooing of the dove in particular has a universe of heaven in it."

This scene, like the others, was looked upon long and earnestly, as were other teachings propounded by the Doctor, who, now that the conditions for the revealments in the mirrors were so favorable, felt loath to bring his discourse to a close. But it was getting late, and what had been witnessed must needs suffice for to-night.

"This will be all for the present," he said at length. "I believe you have been fully able to comprehend these valuable lessons, and I am most happy that we have been so successful, for your good, at least. Next time, if it is so ordered, other examples of human errors will be given thee. Until then, keep inviolate the wisdom which is thine. It is not for the world. Strive to live the better life now, and the good angels will surround and bless thee. Peace be ever with you."

CHAPTER IX.

DIFFERING OPINIONS.

A significant circumstance came into Thorpe's business experiences, which set him to thinking. Now alive to all that went to further the advancement of society looking toward a Universal Brotherhood, he could not help but give this event a serious thought. Just before noon the following day he had occasion to visit the private office of the senior member of the firm, Mr. Adolphus Hedger. As soon as he entered here he perceived that some six or seven men were present, one member of the group seemingly acting as spokesman for the rest. Finding Hedger busy, Thorpe turned to go out, but Hedger motioned him to remain. So he sat quietly down to await his turn. Hedger was saying something upon the subject of the recent labor agitations.

"You say, Mr. Cranch, that you have a grievance. Please state it."

Mr. Cranch seemed to take courage, and said quite blandly: "Well, sir, this house of Stipple & Co. are not fair in their dealings."

"Are not fair? Do they not pay fair wages?"

"Their wages are right enough, but that isn't the point."

"Please state the point if you will, as my time is very limited."

"They do not recognize the rights of organized labor."

"What are your rights, please?"

"That we as a body of interested people have a voice in the conduct of their business."

"Ahem, yes; but in what way?"

"In various ways. We believe the true friend to labor should be employed first. It is a fact that Stipple & Co. employ those who are not members of our organization."

"Ah, ha! I see. It is class discrimination you want, is it?" Hedger looked the

speaker in the eye for several seconds. "Well, let's see," he said, reaching across his desk. "Here is an autograph letter from Stipple & Co. Now, what do they say?" After a moment's reading, he asked: "Do you know how long Messrs. Stipple & Co. have been in business? I will tell you, Mr. Cranch. It has been something over twenty-five years. It seems they have hands in their employ whom they have brought up from boys and girls and made men and women of them. They state the difficulty to be this: You want them to turn off these trusted employes, and take on only members of your order. Is that it?"

Mr. Cranch flinched a little at this, but soon put on a very creditable countenance. "We have not said so in as many words, but it amounts to about that."

"And you presume to come in here, and in the face of the most trying financial crisis the world ever knew, and ask us to withdraw our patronage from Stipple & Co.?"

"We wish you to recognize the rights of labor."

"Very well; you ask us to recognize the rights of labor according to your measures of right. What opportunity, sir, have you given Messrs. Stipple & Co. to defend themselves? None, I dare say. A few members who attend your lodges have come together and resolved that you have a grievance. You send out emissaries to herald your complaint. You go from house to house and ask that patronage be denied this most honorable concern, as if the average business man will not ask what premises you have for such unbusiness-like methods. Here is an old and responsible concern, who was a strong house, sir, when you were in knee-breeches, a house which has lived through every great financial depression, has dispensed hundreds of thousands of dollars to its help, and yet you ask them to turn off their honored employes to give your people work. Gentlemen, while you may be in a measure honest in your demands, you are all wrong. As soon ask a workman if he is a member of the Catholic church before you employ him. As I see it,

the goal of a universal brotherhood is not to be reached on those lines. A combination like yours is as much a sin as that of the sugar kings at Washington, or the coal barons of Pennsylvania. I am a believer in the survival of that moral law which gives to every being a true lien upon life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. I am your friend, gentlemen, and the friend of the meanest creature on earth——”

“And yet you scorn to accede to our simple demand?” interrupted Mr. Cranch.

“Your simple demand? Why, my good man, your demand is as complex as the Egyptian labyrinth. Apply the test right here. Have you a skilled artisan among you, one who has worked his way up in life, who cares to spend his time going about secretly trying to injure somebody else? You have not—no, you have not. It is the incompetent fellow who wants the other fellow turned off. I want you to know, sir, that I am an ardent lover of human rights, but I never yet had to stop my work to go

out and ask that one of my neighbors cease his dealings with some other neighbor. I have no further word to give you upon this subject, except to say, that so far as the firm of Hedger & Co. is concerned, your demands are refused. I wish you all a good-day," and in a most unruffled manner Mr. Hedger turned to his papers. His air was that of one who had been giving a simple direction to an employe.

Quite like a man who felt secure in his own importance, Mr. Cranch turned away and he and his associates soon filed out of the office. Mr. Thorpe arose and courteously advanced toward Hedger's desk. His employer did not observe him at first, but when he did he looked up with a sardonic smile.

"That," he remarked, "is the boasted liberty of the nineteenth century. To do business one must ask permission of men who have no business about them. Strange so many commercial interests have bowed to this man of straw—but they have, and that is the secret of this very difficulty. A man

must pay a royalty on manhood nowadays. It is not to be wondered at that honest men are so scarce. I have never yet found it profitable to surrender to an unsound principle—never,” repeated Hedger, firmly. Then he held out his hand for the paper Thorpe had brought him.

For days Thorpe turned this episode over in his mind, and tried to find a reasonable explanation of it. The wisdom of Mr. Hedger he could not have doubted, but why the business world should have this new struggle to contend with he could not understand. Verily, Capital must needs be on the best of terms with Labor, but that it was not so was evident from the everyday riotings going on in the city, which was setting all moral or man-made laws at defiance. Had not these men who toil some rights which had indeed been denied them? So deeply sympathetic was Thorpe, that things such as these threw a mantle of discomfort over his otherwise sunny sphere. With his wife he talked the matter over, but got no nearer a solution. There seemed to be no way left

but to go to Doctor Wade and ask him the all-absorbing question.

Accordingly, Thorpe happened around at the Doctor's house one evening, after tea. The time of his visit seemed most opportune. The Doctor, serene and at this moment unoccupied, received his guest with a warm hand of good cheer.

"All is well with thee, I hope," he said, pleasantly. Then he cast a single scrutinizing glance into Thorpe's open countenance. "Just a slight knot to untangle in the web of life, I take it. Well, sit down and we will concentrate upon the subject for a time." Thorpe had by this time become used to such ready sifting of his thoughts. It took but a few sentences to relieve his own mind of its load.

"Not so bad as it seems, really," smiled the Doctor, cheerfully. "There must have been just a spark of severity in Hedger's talk. His habit of brevity makes him seem severe on first acquaintance. But Hedger is terribly in earnest in all he does or thinks. All self-made men are by nature so, and if

those same labor representatives will but weigh what he has told them fairly and soberly, they will find he has given them some most succinct truths. But, there is another side to the question. Labor has been maltreated, misappropriated, and used to further the selfish ends of a selfish mass of ambitious creatures, who will have, and think they must have, material wealth at any cost of principle. They espouse the cause of riches with the tenacity of bulldogs, and an underling is their slave from the outset. What is the result? Why, the yoke becomes unbearable, and something must be done. Being anything but true warriors, these men, many of them wholly uneducated, grasp the weapon nearest them and deal a savage blow at Capital. Capital, organized as it is, strikes back. Its stroke is quick and the effect of it is far-reaching. Thrown into a frenzy of indiscretion, the half-famished workman is driven to deeds of violence, while, were he even fairly well employed, he would never have revolted. Panics ensue, and we have rioting and blood-

shed. Why? Because of the merest misunderstanding between two primal forces, Capital and Labor. Whetted to a keen edge by want, the wits of the artisan are set to work to devise and plot against the hand of Capital. Organizations are perfected, which necessitate parallel combinations of Capital. A needless war of words goes on, and certain favored ones are found who are able, or think they are able, to lead the labor agitation. These men, ambitious and often hasty, resort to unfair methods, and advise many unfair means of retaliation. As a matter of fact, I will venture to say that this same house of Stipple & Co. agree with the labor element in all important essentials, save, possibly, the one point of who they shall employ. I take it that no honorable concern ever employed men and women for a quarter of a century but that feels a deep debt of gratitude to the cause of labor. This should be taken into consideration. The soul-sickening effort to secretly boycott a business establishment should never be resorted to. Bad principles never breed

good results. The remedy must be more honored and far-seeing. National arbitration must be established. It must become imperative. This is all the organization that is needed. The Government is the fountain-head. Let appeals be made to a body of men like the United States Supreme Court, for instance, and let their decisions be obeyed to the letter. Then all the money now spent in supporting labor unions and wealthy syndicates could be used to pay good and true men to weigh these questions of vital importance. This once done, we will have taken the first step toward a Universal Brotherhood."

"Might not these conspiracies against business concerns even then secretly exist?" asked Thorpe.

"They might; but let the boycott be punished as a conspiracy, which it is, when discovered, and let the Board of Arbitration see that the law is enforced, and it would not take long to stamp it out. It has become a serious fact, and one known to the Mystic Brotherhood, that these same secret

visits are being paid to every important business firm in the land. It still remains a secret, however, because no business man cares to own that he has given audience to a labor delegation. Yet he secretly fears them, but believes that the easiest way is to smooth the hair of the animal downward. This negative makeshift, however, must result disastrously in time. The encroachments will multiply, and the weight will become at last so great that to do business at all will necessitate a still hunt for organized factions which have the largest following. Then the fabric of honest mercantile life will exist only in name, and by that time a new order of things will indeed be necessary. What wisdom do you suppose will ever be deep enough to devise a better lot for man? To hasten the better day is the sacred and sworn purpose of the Universal Brotherhood, when it shall have been fully established."

The Doctor paused and let his chin drop upon his breast. Then he turned his face toward the small dark mirror which lay

upon the table beside him. Into this he gazed for a full minute, when he said:

"In the far-away fastnesses of a certain range of mountains exists a small but mighty group of earnest souls. These people have the deplorable condition of labor at heart, and are to-night sending out subtle thought waves to the material world in behalf of their unfortunate brothers. This group is presided over by a strong mind, known as the Master of the Masses. Through a life of self-sacrifice he has attained to the knowledge of prophecy. Let me see if I can get in communication with him. He may have a word for us." Then the Doctor concentrated a long and earnest gaze upon the mirror. Presently his lips began to move, and Thorpe bent nearer to listen to his words.

"I see the lodge in session at this very moment. A great wall of light looms up behind the group, and upon this letters of flame are beginning to appear. Now I see the words, 'All will be well.' Now in quick succession more words are forming. I will read them

as they form. 'The wealth of the world shall be as chaff before a mighty wind. The rich in spirit shall rise up and bless those who are now the slaves to greed. The so-called rich man of to-day shall lament the loss of his idol. The spiritual dawn is here, and the humble as well as the rich shall be heard. Oh, ye earthly ones, loosen thy grasp upon thy hoardings and go ye forth into a suffering world and buy thy ransom in well-doing. Act while yet ye live that ye may see and know the fruits of thy pains. This power that vaunteth thee is but a moral weakness. The Brotherhood proclaims this warning out of the depths of its most sacred love for good. It is written in the destinies of man that the monster Self shall cease to rule, and that the forgiving spirit of Love shall prevail. Make ye slaves of men no longer. The vision of the Judgment is upon thee.' Now the words are growing indistinct and I can scarcely read them. On the Master's face is pictured a look of angelic sympathy. His white robes are bordered with a beautiful pink aura, denoting

love of the soul. Now the entire picture is fading—and now it has entirely disappeared.”

“When ought the prophecy of the Brotherhood to be fulfilled?” asked Thorpe.

“It can not be long. The signs of the times already denote it. Think of the wealthy people who are already devoting a good share of their profits to benevolent purposes. Why, fifty years ago bequests for strictly charitable purposes were almost unknown. Occasional legacies to religious causes were made, but these were but expressions of self after all. Now while men yet live they give of their abundance and grow strong in giving. They have learned that the selfish railroad magnate, for instance, is quickly forgotten when he drops from sight. The awakened benevolent spirit is remembered forever. Which of these is the richest in his Maker’s sight? Fear ye not, my brother,” said the speaker, soothingly. “These wild murmurings in our city are but the advance sound-waves of the coming of peace. If men who are bound to material things heed not

the warning, they shall fall lifeless in their tracks. It shall be the survival of the fittest, indeed. Still go ye forth with cheerful mien, for a strong hand rules the destinies of the world. In the language of the Master of the Masses, 'all will be well.'"

CHAPTER X.

A WORK OF LOVE.

Among Mrs. Thorpe's most pleasurable anticipations was a projected visit which she had planned with the Doctor's wife. She had been struck with the extreme womanhood of this dapper little being, and as one woman is mysteriously drawn to another, she had been favored with an invitation to spend an afternoon at her home. Mrs. Wade had dropped a word or two about her work of charity, and this had not failed to arouse some curiosity in the mind of Mrs. Thorpe, particularly since she had come into the new life.

Accordingly, when the hour set had arrived, she dressed and was soon on her way. The day, after a dreary storm of wind and rain, was clear and warm and soul-inspiriting.

ing. Mrs. Wade met her at the door and gave her a most cordial welcome.

"This way, please," she said, beckoning her caller toward a still remote part of the house. Mrs. Thorpe was led into a large and pleasant parlor filled with many beautiful things. From an adjoining room came the voices of children at play. Mrs. Wade quietly closed the sliding door between the rooms, and said, smilingly:

"We will try and not be disturbed by the children. Please remove your things. You have come to stay the afternoon, of course."

It gave Mrs. Thorpe pleasure to acquiesce in all Mrs. Wade desired, for her voice had a cheery sunshine in it which was agreeable to her.

"Children?" inquired Mrs. Thorpe, when she had become seated. "I had supposed you had no children."

"Oh, well," smiled Mrs. Wade, "they are ours only in a certain sense. You see the Doctor and I have our separate works to do, and to carry out to practical ends the teachings of our philosophy, we have taken

a few friendless waifs to care for. It is merely a work of love, I assure you, and hence is less a burden than if we were working for material gain. I frequently assist the Doctor in his work, and he in mine, but aside from this our labors for humanity are wholly separate."

"But what of the expense?" suggested Mrs. Thorpe.

"Very true, the expense is rather large, but the Doctor and I have learned the pleasure of giving, and we have learned, too, that true generosity is not without its just rewards. In early life the Doctor acquired a small competence, and upon our marriage we found we were not wholly without ways to help mankind. It was one of the pledges of our union, that we should give of our store to at least one unfortunate child. Ours was not to be a worldly marriage, as marriages go, but a sort of ideal unity of love and benevolence. So with our twin purposes—he to help the unfortunate grown-up children, while I should take care of the waifs—we began our work. To-day

certain blessed souls who have wealth, and who have recognized the spirit of our endeavors, send us certain sums each year to use in the redemption of mankind. Thus our work goes on without the necessity of setting a price upon it. I now have four of these little unfortunates with me."

Tears of fervent pity came to Mrs. Thorpe's eyes as she listened to this. Somehow the speaker's words, soft and smoothly spoken, had a world of inner spirit in them. What heaven was this, to be thus engaged in a righteous work of charity, and all in such perfect accord with those soul-principles so vainly sought for by the popular, loud-voiced benevolent societies.

"And you have no fear of want?" asked Mrs. Thorpe.

"We do not fear; we substitute the word love for fear," replied Mrs. Wade, her eyelids drooping as she spoke. "We have little concern so long as our hearts are in our work. The weakness of mankind is to plan to do, and to set a price upon doing. The way will open to us as long as we hold

this thought. Please let me show you our little Gertrude, who has been with us only a week," and with a cheerful air of pleasure Mrs. Wade went out of the room and soon returned with a child of two years or more in her arms.

A wan color of some previous neglect was still visible upon the child's features, and with extreme pity Mrs. Thorpe arose and took the foundling in her own arms. The little thing, long used to the slights or chance attentions of a thoughtless world, seemed quite indifferent to its surroundings.

"She is already much improved," spoke Mrs. Wade, encouragingly. "Bring a child, however emaciated, into the atmosphere of home love, and it will not be long in recovering. Something besides bodily sustenance is needed, I assure you."

"In what way do you receive guidance in your work?" asked Mrs. Thorpe.

"I will tell you, since your recent experiences have taught you so much. I think you will understand me. I have a private

room all my own, into which no one but myself ever enters. Every day at a certain hour I sit in this room and concentrate upon devout thoughts, and receive my orders. There is nothing like a holy solitude in which to gather one's self together. Somehow, when I take up my home duties again, my way seems clear and my work easier, because it is more just than if I designed to put my mere self-made plans into it. I would advise you and Mr. Thorpe to have a sacred temple like mine, where you could be able to better draw to yourselves a higher influx of divine guidance. It would surely come to you, along with other surprising revelations."

At the instance of Mrs. Wade, she and her caller went into a rear room to see the other children. Among them was a diminutive colored lad. As his large, wondering eyes rolled up there was the queerest depths of African childlife in them. Mrs. Wade called the midget to her.

"Oh, but the little fellow was so destitute and uncared-for," said she, sympathetically.

"His dusky skin was against him, you may believe, as if God colored the faces of his children to denote his love for them. These are Winnifred and Clarence, our two older children," she said, referring to the other two, who completed her strangely unmatched brood.

When they had returned to the parlor, Mrs. Wade seated her friend cozily beside her for a quiet talk. Mrs. Thorpe greatly enjoyed her friend's hospitality.

"We can visit better here than elsewhere," she said, soothingly. A sudden thought of confidence came to Mrs. Thorpe's lips.

"Have you not imagined, Mrs. Wade, the change that has come over our household?" she asked. "And in so short a time, at that! Why, life never seemed so precious as now. I arise early, refreshed and strengthened, and my work, before so much like drudgery, seems but a fulfillment of better things each day. True," she said, smiling a little warily, "when I awake in the night and find myself alone, a feeling of strangeness creeps

over me, but after a moment or two of better thoughts I fall asleep, and perhaps do not awaken again until morning. We are each becoming so taken with our separate duties that there will be days at a time of wholesome neglect between us; then, as if by chance, we will find ourselves visiting like old acquaintances, and recounting our experiences in a sort of mutual home friendship. Have you the belief, Mrs. Wade," she asked, quite seriously, "that this kind of life will ever cause us to grow farther apart?"

Mrs. Wade laughed at the idea. "Farther apart? Why, my child, it is the one expedient that will cause you to cling to each other. Had you begun this life at the time of your marriage, these strange feelings would never have been. A man adores a woman who stands up and is herself, and you know yourself that you venerate a man of individual freedom. Please think back of the time when you were lovers. Did you for once suppose that you would ever be less to each other? The thought never

occurred to you, I dare say. Well, then, if you were individuals at that time, slaves to nobody, but as shining examples to each other, why should you spoil such commendable courtship with a mere marriage ceremony? I am a firm believer in courtship after marriage, and, indeed, to the end of life. Why shouldn't it last?" she asked, now warming considerably to her subject.

"Really, I cannot tell you," replied Mrs. Thorpe. "There would be less divorces then."

"Less divorces—in fact, no divorces at all. I will venture to say that a wrongly mated couple, even, can live measurably happy by living like individuals instead of dependents. Take it among your acquaintances, if you will. How you deplore the lot of men or women who have no minds of their own, who must wait before expressing an opinion to see what his or her mate thinks about it. Had they not fallen into the habit of absorbing and being absorbed, of criticising and being criticised, they would have remained moving factors in society throughout life.

Marriage, you see, is perverted instead of fostered. The bridal ceremony, how replete with choice words and phrases, and how beautiful it is, and how indicative of some splendid sequel that is to adorn the future! But, instead, look at the miserable wrecks of homes about us. One can almost become a cynic and done with it."

"And let me tell you, lest I forget it," said Mrs. Thorpe, now quite awakened by her friend's reasonings, "that I have even dared to think of taking up my old work of art again. Somehow, it hasn't seemed just the thing to mix painting and housework together, especially when life went on so dull and unengaging. But now—well, I believe I could paint as never before. I am going to try, at least."

"Do so by all means. You can paint into the picture the possibilities of the new life about you," advised Mrs. Wade, now with a truly sympathetic enthusiasm. "Art is but the sublimest reflex of existing conditions, at best. To make a book the author has but to live the life he is depicting, and the world

will read it. To put a scene upon canvas well, an unburdened imagination must be employed. Slavery never did give us admirable pictures to look upon."

Mrs. Thorpe had been most agreeably surprised at finding her friend so much of a philosopher. It must have been a most able handiwork of Wedlock, she believed, to have brought into perfect unison two such strong minds as she and the Doctor. Certain false reasoners claim that to insure harmony either the husband or the wife must represent the negative side, the other the positive. How easily, under the new dispensation, can both be strong, and with years grow stronger as life opens up its broader possibilities!

The afternoon was far spent when Mrs. Thorpe arose to go. A look of beaming satisfaction rested upon her face, which comes from a contented soul. She had in times past gone out into society, had been charmed and entertained by devoted friends, but never yet had she taken on so much pure life as now. There was love in

the very atmosphere of this model home, and an untrained heart even could not have helped but feel its presence. Much, indeed, would Mrs. Thorpe have to relate to her husband that night, and with the exultant heart-throbs of early wedlock did she look forward to the hour of his return. This was life, indeed.

CHAPTER XI.

AN UNEXPECTED ARRIVAL.

To further round out this rather charming picture of domestic existence, something of the unusual seemed destined to occur, which, though an incident small of itself, might have meant much in reality. One afternoon, while Mrs. Thorpe sat busily sewing, she heard a scratching sound at the side door, as if made by the paw of some animal. With not a little curiosity she arose and opened the door. There upon the steps stood a large, finely formed St. Bernard dog, furiously wagging his tail in the fashion of dogs that have some tidings to impart. Mrs. Thorpe hesitated a moment, then spoke a friendly word to the dog, much as she would address a near neighbor. The dog gave forth a yawn of impatience, and lifted his right paw. Out of his expressive

eyes came a look almost human. His head was large and his whole demeanor revealed a superior instinct and intelligence. Almost involuntarily did Mrs. Thorpe stoop and take the lifted paw and give it a welcoming shake. As she did this she fixed her gaze questioningly upon his eyes. She saw there some vast depths she could not describe.

"Hero!" she said, using the first name that suggested itself to her, "have you a message for me?"

At this the dog almost went into an ecstasy of delight, and gave a quick bark of understanding.

"Well, my dear fellow, come in," she said, opening wide the door.

The mute caller fairly ambled his shaggy form into the room, and with trained deference went over and sat down upon a rug before the mantel. Little Mabel came running in just then, and at sight of the child Hero seemed suddenly possessed of some new and intense happiness. There exists a ready-formed friendship between children

and the brute creation. It amounts at times to an almost mysterious, unspoken acquaintanceship, far beyond the wisdom of man. With all the confidence of an old friend, Mabel ran up and patted Hero upon his head, and allowed him to put his nose in among her curls. The satisfied, intense love of his lowly race seemed now to glow out of those dark, deep eyes.

Our first thoughts of devotion to the speechless animal is to appease its hunger. With the spirit of a pleased child Mrs. Thorpe beckoned Hero into a rear room and fed him. Yet he ate only sparingly, then looked intently up at her as if to ask a question.

"To be sure you are welcome," replied Mrs. Thorpe, getting his query intuitively. Another yawn of goodfellowship and another furious wagging of his tail denoted the caller's added delight. As if to further voice his understanding, he crossed the room and crouched down upon another mat beside the stove. Laying his head between his paws, he followed his friends about the room with

still eager eyes. Mrs. Thorpe smiled at his seeming presumption that he was a desired guest. But somehow, with little concern as to the correctness of her acts, she returned to her sewing, while Mabel, with the heart-vision of a child, squatted down before her mute friend and began a gibbering talk to him. Occasionally her companion would pound the floor with his tail, as if he understood her. Yet he did not stir from where he lay, except to occasionally raise his head in pleasant acquiescence to some kindly stroke of Mabel's upon his shaggy coat.

When Mr. Thorpe came home, and after his greetings with his family were over, Mrs. Thorpe asked him to go into the kitchen and pay his respects to their dumb visitor. Accordingly he did as he was told, and when he beheld the great form of Hero, some strange feeling of concern came over him.

"Hero, come here," spoke Mrs. Thorpe. With an eager readiness Hero arose and came forward, and with the sagacity of one of his kind, raised his eyes to those of Mr. Thorpe.

"A grand fellow, surely," commented Thorpe, patting his hairy neck. "Hero, tell us who you are, and where you came from."

A low whine, followed by a look of intense longing, was Hero's answer.

"Strange that he should come to us," speculated Thorpe. "He is no common dog. What a grace seems to belong to his every movement. We must spare no pains to return him to his rightful owner."

With all possible fidelity Thorpe the next day advertised him in the leading papers, and though it brought one or two replies, no rightful owner came. His devotion to the family, and to little Mabel in particular, was truly pathetic. It would have grieved any member of the family to have spoken a cross word to him. An old and generous soul seemed to look out of his eyes as his friends grew to know him better.

One quiet evening Mr. Thorpe, Mabel and Hero were taking a stroll down the street. A beautiful summer sunset had gilded house-tops and foliage alike, and the air was soft and in keeping with the other natural

beauties of the hour. Presently down the walk they saw coming the erect form of Doctor Wade. Thorpe had not as yet met the Doctor away from his home, and he was not a little curious to see him on the street, that he might better compare him with other men. The Doctor was dressed in a fashion somewhat out of date, but in good taste withal. His long gray whiskers gave him a venerable look. He walked with a cane, and stepped quite briskly for one of his years. He smiled as he came up, and grasped Thorpe's hand warmly.

"Ah, yes, and this is little Mabel," and the speaker stooped and patted the child's cheek. And this——" Here the Doctor stopped and looked gravely down at the dog.

"Hero, our friend, the Doctor," kindly spoke Thorpe.

Hero had already caught the Doctor's eye and seemed looking with all his gaze at him. Instantly there came a bark of some kind of recognition, and Hero fairly leaped into the Doctor's face. The Doctor took both his paws in his hands.

"You know me, do you, old fellow. There, that will do. Let me tell your friends more about you," and Hero was made to leap down upon all fours again. "Mr. Thorpe, you are entertaining no common friend to man. There are but few such as he in the world. Hero, as you choose to call him, may have come thousands of miles to be one of your family. I entreat you to make him welcome while he stays, for his mission is only to bring you light of the inner soul. To me he is a living protest against the world's unkindness to animals; aye, more than that, his exterior covers an old, old soul having a much truer vision than either you or I. You may or may not know that I look upon every animal with reverence. To kill and eat a brute of any kind I could not. Since I discarded flesh food my attitude toward the animals has changed. I see more in them to admire and love. To take the gross flesh of a lower animal into one's system has a tendency to make us like beasts, and little can we know what vastly superior being than ourselves we are slay-

ing. To wantonly go out and kill for pleasure is the vainest as well as the wickedest of all superficial enjoyments."

The Doctor had started with his friends down another avenue, and as they talked Hero walked beside Mabel with the keenest of brute enjoyment.

"Can it be that the world has been wrong all these centuries?" inquired Thorpe.

"Not wholly wrong, as I see it. We have come up out of an age in which the gross animal instincts of man have prevailed. It is a trait of the stronger animal to destroy the weaker. While we were animals, largely, we killed, and ate the flesh of that which we killed, but when the day of the better life came on, Nature called a halt. The human organism has now become too refined to permit habits so gross to go on. As a consequence, lamentable sicknesses and mysterious contagions have come, and every few years new ones appear as a result of our neglect to understand Nature's commands. Certain old nations, which have long since learned this truth, and eat no

flesh food, are to-day the freest from disease and the strongest people living. And yet our boasted civilization does not seem capable of understanding a truth so dreadfully apparent as this. It is indeed a warning, as the few people in our midst have already discovered. I will venture to say that in another century the meat-eater will be the exception rather than the rule. Rather queer departure, isn't it?" asked the Doctor, smilingly.

"Rather," mused Thorpe. "But the discoveries in science have been so marked in other respects I have almost grown to think nothing impossible. As you speak of it, I can recall many instances when the thought of devouring flesh food has been obnoxious to me."

"So with thousands of others who eat it. I regard the abstinence from flesh food as positively necessary to our advancement. It is the one secret of the widespread intemperance among us. A hard drinker is invariably a great meat eater. Meat is a stimulating food, and leads to stimulating

drink. Never will temperance advocates make any headway so long as the custom of meat-eating remains. This is a magnificent heresy, you may imagine, to put forth in this age of strong intellectual research; yet it is but just to say that he who does not heed the warning must needs expect nearly every dire bodily ailment of the future to overtake him. We are becoming too refined to live the life of the lower races of animals. We must make haste and conform to the moving progress of the age.

"But now, as to Hero—indeed, you have rightly named him," interposed the Doctor, with a gratifying look down upon the animal. Hero answered the compliment with a sudden wag of his tail. "I have really never met him before, except in the astral, and I must tell you how it happened."

"I shall be most happy to hear it," said Thorpe, with gratitude.

"Well, some years ago, before I had come into the new life, I used frequently to receive warnings of danger in ways most unexpect-

ed to me. *One night about midnight I was awakened by the touch of something upon my hand. As my lamp was yet burning low, I looked and saw standing by my bedside a large St. Bernard, who was evincing signs of some intense concern. Used as I had been to those things, I soon dropped off to sleep again, until I was awakened the second time in a like manner. This time the dog seemed determined that I should arise. Now fully awakened, I concluded that it was best to make an investigation, at least, so I arose and drew on some clothing. In the meantime the dog had vanished, I could not have told just when. Taking my lamp I went below, but could find nothing wrong. Just as I gave up the search and was going upstairs again, I thought I would take a peep into the cellar. Accordingly I opened the cellar door, and in an instant the danger of the moment flashed upon me. A strong smell of smoke came into my face, and with a heroic silence I hastened into the cellar, and without awak-

*A true incident.

ening any of the house put out the fire, which had been creeping up from an ash box toward the joists in the floor above. My debt of gratitude to the dog was without bounds. Never since then have I set eyes on him until now. Do I know this Hero is the same animal? Just let him tell his own story. Hero! was it you who came to my bed that night?"

Instantly Hero pricked up his ears, and gave forth an expressive whine, and licked the Doctor's hand in the most humble delight.

"To be sure it was thee. Great is thy understanding, but few are thy words," rehearsed the Doctor, taking the great head of the brute lovingly in his hands.

"As I have told you, Mr. Thorpe, you will do well to treat him right royally while he stays, for in time his mission will have been fulfilled, and then he will leave you. I do not dare to tell you all you are yet to know of him, or just how he will take his final departure, but when he is moved to act, do not oppose him, but let him enter into your

plans as if he were one of you. Hero can never make the mistakes we merely human beings make. Now, if you please, I will need to bid you a good-evening. Next week I believe we are to have another talk with the Brotherhood," and with this the Doctor bowed and went his way.

CHAPTER XII.

AN HOUR ON 'CHANGE.

With each new step into the occult realm came an added sacrifice. Strange that a world so prone to self-indulgence, to errors in belief, to habit, and to a thousand other human frailties, should not be able to serve Self and the higher life at one and the same time. And yet as Mr. and Mrs. Thorpe received new life, it did not seem so strange. Real energy is not of the earth, earthy. What we call power is often only a human weakness. The humble peasant, with his odylie forces conserved and kept until times of need, faces emergencies that might destroy a warrior. Spiritual strength cometh not with loud acclaim, but in the silent watches of the night. It is a gift which only he is entitled to who can cast his idols aside.

But to be prompted to discard the use of flesh food seemed strangely suggestive to the Thorpes. So imbued with the new life had they become, that to question a teaching such as this would have seemed disloyal as well as ungrateful. It were indeed well that the lessons had so much as been given them. The life of redemption once taken up there is no turning back. A slighted teaching by the way brings us pain. Pain is Nature's reminder that her laws are ever in force. The reward of well doing is a thousand-fold more to the human heart than faith.

Yet, as may be the case with other seeking minds who read this book, neither Mr. nor Mrs. Thorpe found this idol a difficult one to cast aside. In fact, the change had already come within them; it only needed a suggestion, since they had not as yet emerged from under the cover of popular infancy. Many times nauseating feelings of distaste came to them, and upon the advice of friends they would cast about for the reasons. They scalded the milk, they called

the plumber to examine the drainage, they bought sanitary clothing and ate coarse breads, yet the unpleasant experiences would even then return. This would move them to delve still deeper into the popular category of reasons, which, alas, developed every imaginary cause but the right one. They had even suffered from dyspepsia and fevers, but laid it to the water they drank, upon further consultation with their physician. The man of medicine who can not coin some logical excuse for human ills that will not conflict with his patient's appetite might as well go out of the business. So, to better emphasize a welcome deliverance, our friends' soiled and worn pass-book that had so long made its daily rounds between house and meat-shop was forever abolished.

It may be supposed that Doctor Wade's labors with others who were drifting aimlessly about in life, was not diminishing. The number of suffering souls who came to him was increasing daily. It was a peculiar fact that scarcely one came for medical treatment. The Doctor's medicine-case was

seldom called into use. His was a higher therapeutics, which the doctor of the future will need to rely upon or abandon his trade. The world is fast getting above drugs and professional flattery.

Among the Doctor's younger pupils was Robert Fletcher. Robert had been for some time looking forward to the Doctor's promised visit with him to the Board of Trade rooms. Here existed a paradoxical fact in human life he could not account for. Why men raved and shouted themselves hoarse for some fancied gain to their pockets, when in private life they seemed moderately good citizens, was an unsolved question with him. He craved the Doctor's inspection of the very premises, and possibly he might help to unravel the mystery.

Very thoughtful of Robert was it to invite his friend Thorpe to go along. The hour appointed happened to be one when Thorpe could get away from the store, so it was with some secret satisfaction that he dropped in upon his friends soon after they had taken their seats in the visitors' gallery.

Robert had already caught the spirit of the excitement, while the Doctor seemed as calm as the Sphinx.

The day was one of unusual interest in the wheat pit. The tendency of the market was upward, though an undercurrent of uncertainty kept the tension upon the nerves of the operators drawn to a severe test. The greed of the man who bought was equalled only by the avarice of him who had something to sell. Petty artifices to bolster up an appearance of strength or fancied weakness were cunningly resorted to. Men shouted when there was nothing to shout for, while the half-crazed beggar for options was made to keep silent through terrible and trying ordeals. The ticking of the telegraph instruments, the shrill call of the messenger-boys, and the stir of excitement everywhere, portrayed to the looker-on at least a hint of pandemonium itself. A sudden revulsion in the reports, and two hundred men, with hands in the air, would rush madly together, and crowd and jostle

their neighbors in their eagerness to be heard.

Thorpe tapped his friend Robert on the shoulder, then said laughingly: "Thoroughly and willfully interested, I see. Wouldn't like to take a hand in the speculations yourself, would you?" Then he turned and extended his greetings to the Doctor before seating himself beside him.

"Here is a crudity of earth life without limit," commented Robert. "Human beings are these, if you will, who mingle as friends, but fight each other with the yell of the savage."

"I know it; I have thought of it often," reflected Thorpe. "But this very center of exchange has been many years in coming to this. It must have a meaning."

The increased clamor just then made it almost impossible to talk and be heard. Some new tip in the market had just been dropped into the throng, and such united yells cannot be imagined by one who has never heard them. While this lasted the three spectators sat waiting for a lull.

Thorpe, who was the stronger nerved of the two, found it interesting to note the reflections of the scenes below in Robert's face, while the Doctor even now seemed to be wholly unshaken by his surroundings. When he spoke it was with the composure of a saint.

"Unmasked human nature, I call it," he said, philosophically. "You must give these fellows, or most of them, at least, credit for being themselves with a vengeance. It's get if you can; if not, then suffer the humility of loss. There is a monster charm in either for the time."

"Gambling?" queried Thorpe.

"We tire of calling it that," sighed the Doctor. "Call it the vilest of names, and it goes on as if it were a veritable necessity. But what a place to study faces! Do you see that hardened-looking, portly man sitting in a chair near the edge of the wheat pit? Well, that single individual is a rare discovery to me. Besides the deep marks of pain upon his face, there is something in his bearing to command our deepest pity.

Around that man is a perfect mass of demons. His aura of self is indomitable, and though he may not know it, the tender life-cord is liable to snap at any moment. He fondles his cigar as if it were the only warm friend he has left. He has passed the stage of bodily activity, and so he sits and keeps company with the demons who are every moment sapping his vital energy. He would not come here at all, for his soul is sick and troubled, but for the hungry horde of elementals that compel him to come."

"Must he be cast out of life without escape from these?" asked Robert.

"A very grave question is that," said the Doctor, with a thoughtful look at Robert. "The law of chance may deliver him at last into the hands of his Maker, but who would choose to run the gauntlet? On the other hand, look at the young and susceptible operator at the left. He is new in the business. On his forehead I see a brand of red, in the shape of a cross. Unconsciously he lifts his hand to wipe it off. But his fel-

lows would call it perspiration. It is not that at all. It is the curse of some karma acquired in a previous life. Some day not long distant the strain will be too much for him, and the hand of the self-destroyer will send a bullet crashing through his livid brain."

"These are extreme cases," remarked Thorpe. "What other decided phases do you see?"

"What phases do we not see, indeed. There are men down there who have learned the law of self-preservation. Their odyllic force is still their most powerful weapon. Their indiscreet neighbors shout and bluster, while they remain calm and good-natured. They draw the fickle goddess of Fortune to them as if by some secret of the Orient. Men wonder why they succeed so well. But their success, even, will some day leave them, because of its illegitimacy. There is a charm to the life it is hard to break away from. Though it may seem as child's play to you and me, it is one of the terrible outcomes of the material growth

about us. Our false notions of riches have foisted the seeming curse upon the people. I would not dare predict where it will end, but end it must in time. All things earthly have an ending. Even the finer sensibilities of the subjective self are frequently brought into action in this awful tirade against human rights. This makes the madness all the more devastating. But it is an engine that is to help hasten a more speedy development of the race. Intense natures meet, clash, and fall by the wayside. The thought-waves set in motion stir the very foundations of our social life. If the foundations are stirred, new life springs forth, and gives promise of better things. Verily, these willing dupes may even be in one sense our benefactors; who knows?"

"And the years, too, this center has been forming," again reasoned Fletcher.

The Doctor sat an instant in silence. "Yes, forming, inch by inch, like the tell-tale doom of a lost soul as it is written on the features of the human ego," he mused.

The Doctor's attention was just then drawn to a peculiar-looking individual who sat, or rather lounged, in the gallery near them. The keenest of distress looked out of his dilated eyes. But of this man he said not a word, but soon resumed his study of the wheat pit.

Large stakes were made and as many were lost upon this rather memorable day. As the measured tick of the great clock on the wall told forth the fleeting moments, the feverish unrest seemed to increase. Now almost within his grasp came the frenzied operator's share of the shifting profits, then it would elude his tingling fingers like a shadow of youth. To the truly composed eye of Doctor Wade nothing vainer could be conceived. He had when a child witnessed this same strife of children in their games of marbles. Scuffles, violent words and contentions over the possession of a single toy marble, as if the salvation of a soul depended upon it. These children had grown to be men now. To the Doctor they seemed to have not yet outgrown their infancy.

Suddenly into these serious thoughts, like a flash of liquid light, came the report of a pistol. The poor emaciated being the Doctor had just observed near them was standing up and firing a revolver, the reports of which came with quick succession. At first there was a terrible lull, then a yell of new frenzy, as everybody, above and below, fled in a mass to escape the flying bullets. In one of Thorpe's fits of inspiration he sprang forward and grasped the maniac and wrenched the pistol from his hand. Thus instantly baffled, the man struggled fiercely, but the strong arms of Thorpe held him secure. Moans from both the gallery and from below gave evidence that some defenseless people had been wounded. But the firing over, cooler heads came to the relief of Thorpe, who still held his man with an iron grip. An officer had slipped some handcuffs over the wrists of the prisoner, and in another moment he was hurried quickly out of the building.

Thorpe's first thought was of the Doctor. Now free from danger he began to tremble

with apprehension. But when he caught the unmoved eye of his philosophic friend he grew calmer.

"Nobly done," remarked the Doctor, with a smile of one who had been witnessing a friendly scuffle. Robert, who had unconsciously leaped to a rear seat, came and tried to appear calm at his friend's side; but he was yet pale from fear and excitement.

Fortunately only two or three had come in the way of the bullets, and these, whose wounds proved not very serious, were also hurried quickly out of the dense throngs which had by this time gathered about them.

"Please let me offer my interpretation of this circumstance," said the Doctor, quietly taking his friends' arms as they prepared to go below. "Every act of violence has its legitimate cause. Some men are mediums by habit. If they are under the bans of joy, they shout the tidings to everybody; if under a cloud of despair, or in the presence of strife, they draw from the elements about them, and perhaps become murderers in-

stanter. This crazed and unfortunate being was the victim of the very scenes he was witnessing. Had he killed a dozen, his crime would not have been a crime. Doubtless the law will shut him in a cell with the meanest of criminals. The real criminal down yonder will go free."

Soon they reached the street, and in time managed to work their way through the swaying mass of people who had by this time congregated. Many wild rumors were flying about, and blanched faces of interested comers quickly gathered in scores among the mob. As if to heighten the confusion, the cries of the newsboys rang shrilly out, and flaming headlines upon their papers were craftily exposed to the distempered eyes of everybody. One wily little fellow, in his moment of excitement, pulled Thorpe's arm and thrust a paper up at him.

"Hanged!" was the catchy word which greeted his eyes. Then Thorpe remembered that this was hangman's day, and here the news of the hanging, not yet a half-

hour old, was already being told by the ravenous newspapers. From a sort of habit he dropped a penny into the hand of the lad, took his paper and walked slowly along with his friends. Casually he ran his eyes down the columns of sensational news.

"I'll tell you what," he declared, with some impatience, "that curse of hanging makes me boil over every time I see it in print. As if two wrongs ever make a right."

The Doctor smiled and looked with a firm degree of calmness into Thorpe's disturbed countenance.

"And yet it is but a logical carrying out of those other misdoings over yonder," he philosophized, meaning the extraordinary scenes even now going on in the Board of Trade rooms. "The mistake is here: an inflamed and vindictive populace believes it is inflicting the severest punishment of all. They do not reflect that when they kill a man for murder, they inflict the lightest punishment known. For, if a criminal is hardy enough to kill he is hardy enough

to hang. We shudder at the thought of the gallows. Why? Because, being truly sensitive creatures, this mode of punishment seems hideous to us. Thus we judge a hardened criminal by ourselves. How foolhardy are we, then, when we slip the noose over the head of him who, like other criminals before him, stands defiantly up upon the gallows and does not so much as flinch. Better a thousand times shut the fellow up and teach him how poor in spirit he is. Such unfortunates are as babes in the grasp of the invisible elementals about them. When you take his life you but fling him out to keep company with the already numberless hordes of invisible demons, whose work is but to incite still further crime. Judicial murder not only attracts these unseen denizens to our doors, but it inflames innocent minds to murderous thoughts. This is yet to be one of the hardest lessons in our courts of law. Popular passions are not easily reasoned with."

Thorpe glanced at his watch and found it was time he returned to his place of busi-

ness. So with not a little reluctance he bade his two friends farewell and hurried away. Once more by himself he readily came to believe that their visit to the Board of Trade rooms had been planned by some unseen force, or destiny; for somehow these latter-day mystics never fail to be present when a circumstance is about to occur which is to give emphasis to their teachings.

CHAPTER XIII.

A MYSTIC LODGE-ROOM.

This most extraordinary occurrence, which took place in the Chicago Board of Trade rooms not long since, will be readily recalled by many readers. The news-gatherer discussed it, enlarged upon the details, printed many rumors which had little or no connection with it, and for a brief period fed the public mind with the trashy stuff, then it was suddenly dropped and went the way of all sensational things, seemingly forgotten, even, by the very ones who read the startling headlines with the keenest relish.

Agreeable to Mrs. Wade's advice, Mr. and Mrs. Thorpe had been turning over in their minds the thought of setting aside an isolated room in their own house as a chapel for meditation. This could not be done

without some sacrifice, to be sure, but when their plans were completed the sacrifice was not so great as they had expected. A small but nicely papered bedroom was selected, and all articles of furniture or ornamentation removed. An hour each night before bed-time had been set apart for concentration and meditation upon spiritual things. What a strange and most unusual work was this. It was a fact, however, that they did not know just how to proceed, and when the room had been prepared, Mrs. Thorpe thought it best to soon pay another visit to Mrs. Wade for further particulars. Their good intents were not lacking, as was their knowledge of details. Some specific mode of procedure was needed.

To the truly earnest worker in all causes of humanity comes light upon every subject, for the invisible forces seem to be ever present about us. When Thorpe arrived at his office that day, he found a note lying upon his desk. It was written in a fine hand and was worded in mystic phrases. It said:

"My dear Friend and Brother:—Please permit me to aid thee in thy work of love. Thy motives are heaven-sent, but thy knowledge is lacking. This day I will send to thy house some articles of use, which please do not unpack until I arrive. I will come at eight to-night. Ever thine, I. M. Servetus."

Hope instantly kindled in Thorpe's heart as he read these words. But once had he seen his friend Servetus since the day in the Rookery, and now he was actually coming to his house to assist in this very hour of need.

When he arrived home that night he found the box, which Mrs. Thorpe had set carefully away. It was an hour of much rejoicing, for they began to feel that some of the fruits of their new life were about to be realized.

Promptly at eight o'clock Mr. Servetus came and was introduced to Mrs. Thorpe. Quite unobserved at first stood Hero, as if studying the new arrival, but when his eyes met those of the mystic a pleased look of recognition came into them. Mr. Servetus,

patting him knowingly upon his head, and looking him steadily in the eye, said in a low, measured voice:

"King of thy race, rejoice thee with us this glorious night. Bring thy light to shine with ours that thy mission shall be the better fulfilled."

Then the speaker turned to his friends. "If you please, I will take him with me into the chapel, and you can now assist me in unpacking the box."

All this was most surprising to Mrs. Thorpe, who had not supposed that Mr. Servetus was truly a mystic with such unerring powers of divination. It was but a few minutes' work to remove the box to the chapel and take off its lid. This done, a stand was provided, and at the bidding of Mr. Servetus Mr. Thorpe withdrew, leaving Hero alone with him.

A half-hour might have elapsed, when Hero came downstairs, seemingly filled with ecstatic delight. It was plainly to be seen that all were now to repair to the chapel. With Hero in the lead, they went

thither with the greatest expectancy. Three chairs were brought, and these completed the entire furnishings of the room. A small square box stood upon the stand, draped with a dark mantle. Two charts adorned the wall back of the stand, upon which were printed certain holy phrases and a brief prayer. Not another article adorned the walls of any kind. Mr. Servetus said:

"After this hour you will do well to make this a lodge of silence. No word other than those upon the charts should ever be spoken. Silence is the potent insignia of love and power. A word should be chosen each time you sit, to be spoken only mentally, and nothing besides this than holy thoughts should enter your minds. Think deeply, and leave all remembrance of the world outside. Please be seated."

With one accord Mr. and Mrs. Thorpe took the seats designated for them, while Hero, as if from some superior knowledge of his own, lay quietly down directly in front of the stand. Mr. Servetus turned the

gas low and raised the drapery from the box. To the easy sight of all a luminous globe was revealed, of perfect crystal formation. Upon this he bade all to concentrate their thoughts with the word Will predominating. Then seating himself, all became still. Some twenty minutes were spent in concentration, then all heads were bowed and eyes closed in meditation. It was truly an impressive silence. Each member of the group seemed to breathe at once. Hero had laid his head between his paws and seemed like one in sleep.

At last, and at a sign from Mr. Servetus, the gas was turned on, and with reverent voices all repeated in unison the words upon the charts. Some deep thrill of conscious love seemed contained in every line. It may have been owing to the prolonged silence just passed through, but evident it was that some unusual power was present with them. The words repeated, the lodge was formally closed by an Egyptian prayer spoken by Mr. Servetus. Then all left the room and went below.

"Well done," said Mr. Servetus, taking a seat with the others in the parlor. "In the globe I saw rich promises for you, my friends, and I feel sure that you will be faithful to your charge, and in time you can see things for yourselves. Once a week for three weeks I am to come and meet with you, and if you choose you can select from among your friends enough to make the number seven. You will be guided in this also. Do not be in haste in asking others to come, but wait and be content with silence as yet."

"And have you no claims upon us for all these pains?" asked Mr. Thorpe.

"Most assuredly I have," smiled Mr. Servetus. "It is this: That you delve deeply into the occult mine about you and bring forth rich returns in behalf of an erring world. Your home is to become a divine thought center in behalf of the great Brotherhood of Man. These thought centers are being established all over the globe. You will do well to forbid all sensuous thoughts to ever enter your chapel. **When**

passing scenes come into the crystal, some will not see them, while no two will see them alike. Do not be too anxious for phenomena of this kind, for all phenomena is but a secondary phase of the law. The one great intent is the concentration of noble thoughts, which the world now stands sorely in need of. In time these observances will become a part of your lives, and later on other grander possibilities will open before you. These, my friends, shall be my sole reward for what I have done thus far."

This meeting, humble as it may have seemed, had a wonderful significance in the lives of the participants. Mr. Servetus, like Doctor Wade, seemed doubly in earnest in all he did. Though there was a rather solemn exactness in his words, his demeanor was easy and consistent. The merest trifle never escaped his notice. While Mr. or Mrs. Thorpe could not have found words to express their thanks, his utter unselfishness seemed to forbid them. So, in keeping with the silence in which they were to act, they

put off any special inquiries about the work for the present. It seemed best that the developments should more properly come along in their proper order.

When their friend and teacher had gone, with an almost simultaneous movement both husband and wife went to the alcove and looked in upon their sleeping babes. How truly grand were all these revelations, and what wonderful love had they now to bestow upon these little innocents, and how beautiful were they both already growing under the improved conditions of the household.

"And all in this age of religious and intellectual wisdom at that," said Mr. Thorpe, taking his wife's hand in his. "Miserable souls go scouring the world for happiness, when the very essence of enjoyment they have right in their own homes, if they only knew it. Shall we follow the humble goddess, or shall we cast it out before it is too late? Think of the world, my dear, that needs a redeemer," and the speaker drew his wife fondly to him. "They tell us thoughts

are subtle things and can overthrow the affairs of nations. Should they not also so much as make holy the fireside and home? I have no wish to turn back now, have you?"

Thorpe spoke these deeply religious thoughts like one whose happiness was for the moment supreme. Mrs. Thorpe was not a woman of words. Her keenest enjoyment came to her in times of silence. Hence her only reply was to put her arms about her husband's neck and sob for joy. Through her tears she looked down upon the pretty pink cheeks of her offspring. How she could ever have drooped and tired of life she knew not.

For a considerable time they stood and watched the tiny sleepers, then drew together the curtains that surrounded their little bed. It was late, and without further ceremony, except a loving kiss, they parted for the night.

CHAPTER XIV.

HEALTH AXIOMS.

The talk which had been planned with Doctor Wade took place the following evening. Very rapidly indeed came the events which crowded themselves into our friends' lives. In business Mr. Thorpe was once more successful. Unlike some reformers, who grow fine-spun and impotent when pursuing spiritual things, he carried his light even into the realm of trade. It was evident that Hedger was pleased with him, though he seldom ever referred to matters pertaining to the occult. He seemed assured that no man who lived the life of an awakened soul could ever go wrong, hence he trusted him implicitly. He would gladly have called about him more of such, whom he could meet, if only in silence, upon this higher plane of well-doing.

Every added visit with Doctor Wade was a surprise. This time the mystic's room, which he was pleased to call a retreat, was almost wholly changed. Instead of the richly-colored furnishings, everything was draped in white, and the long, dark mirrors, which still remained, seemed to stand out with a marked and mysterious contrast. All was silence for a time. The lights had been turned partly down, giving the room a weird and mystical appearance. Soon the strains of music were heard, lowly and tremblingly at first, and at no time did it reach more than a delicate, far-away chant. Then it died away entirely, and all was silence again.

Presently a slight breath of air was felt, though not a door had been opened. It seemed to sweep gently down from the mirrors, upon which all had concentrated their gaze. In time this ceased, and vapory clouds began to float upon the mirrors. Figures of people soon slowly appeared, three of whom were dressed in white robes,

with white turbans upon their heads. Then the Doctor said:

“Here we have the forms of three brothers now living in India. You will observe that their eyes are fixed upon some object before them. They are at this moment in the act of concentrating their thoughts in answer to our wishes this evening. Mark the look of intense self-sacrifice upon their faces, how harmonious seem their motives and how firmly united are their purposes. These are men who have sacrificed their entire lives to the work. Such members of our Order are not as yet numerous, hence they are never idle, but labor almost incessantly for the good of the world. It was not until recent years that the western world was chosen as a field of action. But the work of the Brotherhood is already being felt in every avenue of life. Our national legislators feel its subtle influences, and our Capitol is already a wonderful scene of action for this work of regeneration. On the other hand, the Pacific Slope harbors a legion of most worthy thought centers,

while our own city has been selected as the grand center of supply for years to come. Much attention has been drawn to our land of late from all parts of the globe. Our flood of inventions is an evidence of the lead we are taking, and our tendency to cut away from dogmas and much-worn ideas is making us a power in the religious realm."

Here the Doctor paused abruptly, and all looked on in silence. In a moment more he said: "Now the forms of the Brothers are disappearing. We will wait and see what next is shown us."

Almost immediately clouds began hovering over the mirrors, this time with more rapid movements. A separate scene was forming in each mirror. Not until both were complete did the Doctor speak.

"It has been ordered that our talk to-night shall be upon the laws of health. In the right mirror we see the interior of a home of invalids. You will notice the deep lines of suffering upon the faces of every person, and you can almost feel the nakedness of the prevailing conditions. The lamp

in the room, even, burns with a sickly light, and the fire in the grate does not burn, but seems to smoulder in neglect. The whole scene is a most dispiriting one.

"In the other mirror we have a household of health. See the vivacious looks upon the faces of both the children and the adults. A crackling, cheerful fire burns in the grate, and the lamp throws off an aura of good cheer. Could any two scenes be more in contrast? Let us try and guess some of the reasons which has brought the invalid mother to her present condition. She looks consumptive and fretful. I dare say that she has been chased during all her years by that bugbear of cold-catching. This is one of the most popular errors of mankind. Fear, to begin with, is the groundwork of all sicknesses. This woman no doubt espoused the cause of fear in early life. In her Sunday-school she was taught to fear God, to fear wrong-doing, to fear the evil about her, and in perfect accord with these teachings she has feared that she would catch cold every time she stepped out into

the sunlight. Why, the major part of our people court this error with the utmost tenacity. It has become an idol of supreme importance. The new light says there is no cold-catching. The human system, when it has been subjected to the many indulgences of appetite, gets clogged, and Nature—our over-generous Mother Nature—calls a halt. We are prostrated, our appetite leaves us, our heads fill up, and the undeveloped person begins to marvel where he ‘caught that cold.’ He wonders if he hasn’t incautiously breathed a chilly draught somewhere, or, indeed, if his clothing isn’t too thin, or, to make the trouble still more complex, if he hadn’t better take a dose of medicine or a drink of hot liquor. Still Dame Nature looks charitably on, and even after all this blocking of her machinery does her best to restore her patient to comparative health.

“How much better did we reason this way: sickness is but the beginning of getting well. We have been years, perhaps, getting sick. When Nature can stand our

erroneous habits no longer, we receive the summons to pause. This we call an 'attack' of sickness. It is not sickness at all. It is a most magnificent reminder that there is a chance for us to be made well, and that a gracious law of repair has taken us in hand. We ought to be thankful that we are thus carefully guarded; for suppose these reminders never came. We would indeed be subjects of most abject commiseration. The consumptive clings to his idol of 'attack,' and by his emaciated appearance demands sympathy from everybody. How much better had he been an individual from the first who needed no sympathy. He goes about, his overcoat buttoned up under his chin, fearful to the last degree lest he may 'catch' more cold. He puts on heavier clothing, and thus shuts the impurities into the system, instead of letting them exhale through the pores. His very face becomes shriveled from fear, and his voice is weak and complaining. When he dies this same erroneous faith that taught him fear in early life lays it all to Provi-

dence, and so the victim gets an honorable discharge from his earthly ignorance. Much the same with contagions. They feed upon us through our proneness to fear. The physician who does not fear seldom catches a contagion. And yet the thoughtless world does not so much as notice this fact. The individualized, self-reliant person who walks the streets with no more than enough clothing to decently cover him is a living example of health, but he is passed by unnoticed by the victim to disease. Most assuredly he is, for the sickness the man is suffering under is but an emphatic expression of self, and self notices nobody."

The speaker paused, and all looked upon the two pictures in silence. A study could have been made of them for hours. But the time was passing, so the Doctor said further:

"When the devouring of flesh food shall cease, and the curse of intemperance shall grow less, much more spiritual light will come to us. The animal taken into our systems makes us gross and unclean. When

we stop to consider that animal food is nothing more than vegetation taken second-handed, how easy to conclude that it is best to partake of the products of earth before they have passed through some lower organism, which, of course, is subject to more or less organic disease. Kill the beast, and you instill into that flesh the thought of killing. Our son partakes of this same flesh, and in a fit of passion goes off and kills a human being, all because of our having committed the first folly ourselves. No beast is ever wantonly slain but that the slayer feels somewhere in his soul a pang of regret. He may not be conscious of it at the time, but his soul feels it, and is just that much farther alienated from the earthly man. The slayer is doing himself and mankind a great injustice. In time the soul grows weary and longs for freedom. Sickness comes—which is in fact only a reminder of our one chance to reform ourselves—and with the aid of the modern doctor the wrong-doer is hurried out of the world. Thus can we trace all mistakes of

an undeveloped people to some primal cause. We have been taught these things along with our religious faiths, and as heir-looms we cling to them by right. But the time is fast coming when only they who have penetrated the gloom of error can survive. A tremendous call has been made for purity of both soul and body. It will be the survival of the fittest indeed, for pestilence cannot reach a truly illuminated people.

“Look if you will upon this picture of the happy family. Now, imagine a so-called scientific doctor entering the door, by authority of the law, commissioned to inject a certain animal poison into the flesh of those beautiful and healthy children. Why, think you that a family so free from impious thoughts as this needs the help of virus to ward off contagion? The idea is preposterous. Unconscious looks of terror would at once rest upon the children’s faces, for those precious little beings are oftentimes wiser than we. It is only they who have taken poison into their systems by flesh-eating

who need a counter poison to drive it out. I might, however, modify this by saying that even they do not need it, but science, having overlooked the real cause of the contagion, has decided that they do. The truly enlightened person does not, surely. Now, note this fact, that the virus itself is taken from the same animal organism that the beef-eater loves so much to devour. It is not a germ of health that is extracted, but confessedly a particle of poison derived indirectly from the contagion itself. Here is a link of evidence quite enough to convict science of its guilt. It permits men to go on absorbing the diseased germs of flesh into their systems, then to prevent contagion it injects another more subtle poison to counteract the mistake. The new life will have none of this. But the whole theory of vaccination is consistent with the popular idea of medicine. There is scarcely one of us doctors who reach the age of seventy but that dread a call from a patient for medicine. He will have it, he is willing to pay for it, and if we deny him we are

accused of either a softening of the brain or lunacy. A certain French scientist discovers a liquid to 'cure' consumption. Consumption implies something consumed. Can any foreign fluid taken into the system woo a sickened soul back into a body partially eaten up? A single thought in early life might have prevented that condition, and the elixir would not have been sought for. The soul will live and grow lovable in a healthy body. If our thoughts be impure, our habits bestial, our beliefs false, or our sense of justice faulty, some evidence of disorder will surely come to us. Nature never sleeps. She is busy nights when we slumber, entering up against us the mistakes and the triumphs of the day. The so-called Gold Cure is another fabrication. It invites the weak, dependent drunkard to seek relief. Relief from what? His dependence? It does not teach him self-reliance, that the elementals about him have obsessed his being, and that a divine thought would cast them out. Certainly not. It bids him still be weak, the weaker

the better, that the treatment may be more efficacious. He is made mortally sick, and when by a mere chance the patient lives through it, he goes back into the popular life, eats of flesh, and follows the tobacco habit, and the blind sympathizer is heard to say: 'Too bad, but the fellow is drinking again. The devil take him now,' and as a rule the devil does so, literally.

"I opine, my friends, that it will take a liberal use of incense in this room to counteract the effects of these words I have given you. Each word, when we stoop to image an error in words, leaves an unfavorable impress upon our minds. Hence I shall not care to again refer to these phases of error of the lower man, for it is not best that we recognize, except in rare cases, our fealty to disease; for, in fact, diseases do not exist except in our mentalities. This truth you will discern as you go higher. Every remedy needed can be found within. Every soul contains a spark of the divine essence. Go into thy solitude and ask for light. A glow will fan the divine spark into flame.

The flame will warm the body, and invite health. Forget self, and lo, a cure is effected."

As the Doctor ceased, the scenes in the mirror began to fade. Some moments were spent in silence, when upon one of the glasses came a most remarkable picture. It was an exact counterpart of the room which Mr. and Mrs. Thorpe had set aside as a chapel. Even Hero could be seen with his faithful gaze fixed upon the globe.

"Please do not be surprised, my friends," said the Doctor, quietly. "Nothing is impossible when the occult law has the mastery. It seems that I am to give you a word or two of advice upon your work. I will be brief, as our time is getting short. The globe is nothing more than an object to concentrate upon. As an army of men concentrate their united efforts in a conflict, so certain focusing of thought must be employed to bring about any result for good. Your motives are to help mankind. A unity of seven minds gives out a most subtle wave of thought. You are not to think of results.

These are looked after by a mind much wiser than ours. You are even to think not of self, but of a loving, worthy and deserving world. Do not habitually picture error in your thoughts, but hold to the perfect thought of unity. If, perchance, scenes reveal themselves in the crystal, which they certainly will in time, pass them by as incidentals. When you have attained to better knowledge you will be able to interpret them. At first they will be varied and unimportant. In due time they will grow sacredly beautiful, and be the means of much of the guidance you will receive. The good brother who has shown you these ways will perform his work well. Have no fear, now that thy work is so well begun. Be not in haste, but dwell in the spirit of trust, and wait. This is all to-night. Peace be with you."

CHAPTER XV.

CHURCH POLITY.

Following soon upon the events just recorded, Mr. Thorpe received a letter from a friend and legal adviser in the East, informing him that a wealthy uncle had died and had left a small property to him, the bequest to be contingent upon certain conditions. The exact words of the attorney were as follows: "Your uncle, a most just and devout church member, believed all men should profess some religion. Evidently he had been led to suppose that you were not of the fold, and out of the goodness of his heart he made the bequest that this property be given you in case you experience a change of heart and embrace the Christian religion according to the convictions of his certain persuasion. You will doubtless receive official notice soon of this

provision in his will, but I have seen fit to advise you a little in advance, and in a business way you may consider me at your service at any time."

Thorpe received this letter one evening after a long and perplexing day at the store, and as might be imagined, it gave him some peculiar thoughts about things in general. Mrs. Thorpe was deeply impressed with the evident honesty of the uncle, and even expressed her gratitude that they should have been remembered at all. Thorpe folded the letter and fell to musing. He ate his supper in silence, and mused again.

"Well," he said, at last, "what does the mere joining of a church imply?" Mrs. Thorpe was a little startled out of her own reverie by the question.

"I was just trying to think myself what it might imply," she said, seriously. "You will remember how your Uncle Nathan used to speak kindly to you, and how you said you meant to be just like him when you grew up, and how you loved to do errands

for him when no one else was willing, and all that. Why, Uncle was a very good man and was considered wise in his way, and strictly honest in all he thought. I do believe such men go to heaven naturally. They must, surely."

"Oh, yes, they go to heaven, I don't doubt that; but I am at a loss to see how his church membership is going to help get him there. I guess I will think it over for a while. It will do no harm to consult some good authority upon the matter, and then decide."

There lived not many blocks away the Rev. Dr. Paul Gracey, and as soon as opportunity offered Thorpe called at his residence. Mr. Gracey welcomed him quite cordially and invited him into his study. After a few commonplace remarks upon the weather, Thorpe made known his errand.

"Do you wish me to repeat some of the terms of our creed?" asked Mr. Gracey, failing to get the exact drift of his caller's words.

"Not exactly that; I wish to ask you just what it implies to unite with a church like yours."

Mr. Gracey smiled a little, but preserved a pleasant tact, as he said: "Why, it implies an inherent wish to become a Christian, to live a Christian life, and, incidentally, to subscribe to the tenets of our faith."

"Would that, merely, make me a Christian?"

"Not in the completest sense, sir. True church polity teaches us that to be a Christian is to be a follower of Christ, also."

Thorpe caught at this eagerly. "I have the dearest inborn wish to be like Christ, surely. So far I am already a Christian."

"I dare say you are," speculated Mr. Gracey, a little warily. "Have you a letter from any other church organization?"

"I have none."

"Never joined any church, then?"

"I assure you, sir, that I am living the life of self-abnegation," said Thorpe, most humbly. "My late resolution has been to live

wholly for the world, and renounce self entirely."

"Our church is open to legions like you, Mr. Thorpe." Mr. Gracey spoke warmly and with evident truthfulness. "All you need to do is to believe, first, in God, the ruler of the universe; second, in Christ, the Son of God; third, in the complete salvation of the disciples of Christ, and, fourth, in the punishment of all who do not believe on Him."

"Why do you require all these?"

"It is the written law as we interpret it."

"Must I interpret it the same as you?"

"I think you will find this no difficult task, along with the life you say you are living."

"I can punish no man for his deeds," said Thorpe, his head bowed thoughtfully upon his hand.

"But would men ever believe if it were not for the fear of punishment?" asked Mr. Gracey.

"Believe?" questioned Thorpe, looking strangely up at the pastor. "I beg to know

where a man gets his belief. Mine comes to me through the good I can do mankind."

"Oh, certainly, but you mistake my meaning. You are aware that man was created perfect at first, but after his fall there was a reward for just men to throw off this yoke of sin and be saved. This is the foundation of the entire Christian church, and it has saved hosts of unfortunates from perdition."

"It has saved them, has it?" Thorpe honestly tried to grasp the truth. "Well, you know best about that, of course, but I must confess my sympathies are on the side of those who are not saved. Christ never turned away the vilest sinner, did he?"

"But Christ was the real Son of God, who was sent to save all the world."

Thorpe pondered a moment. "And it is my opinion he has done it—the whole world, indeed. Pardon me, Mr. Gracey; I do not mean to oppose your fixed doctrines, or argue with you in the least. I merely spoke a word which I might possibly have better kept to myself. I am exceedingly anxious

to find a reconciliation of yours and my views; that is all."

"Why any special anxiety just now?" questioned Mr. Gracey, with a superior complacency.

"Family matters, mostly," said Thorpe. He certainly did not need to give his exact motive in coming here.

"Well, my dear sir, you have my sympathies. I have known members of our congregation who have suffered from unhappy conjugal relations. My opinion is that only the strictest adherence to church discipline can save one from family woes. You will indeed do well to unite with us."

Thorpe could only smile in silence. Who better than he could decide what was the real cure for family ills. It would have taken too long to give the full text of his recent experiences to the pastor, and had he done so, would he have commended his course, even then?

"My domestic relations are not at all unpleasant; I did not mean that when I spoke of family matters," explained Thorpe. "I

thank you sincerely for your kindness, Mr. Gracey," he said, rising to go. "I will give your advice my most earnest consideration."

As Mr. Gracey shook hands he said warmly: "Come around to our church next Sunday. The way into our society may not be so devious as you may suppose. We need earnest souls. Come, by all means."

Thorpe left the minister's house in anything but an equable state of mind. Either he had been too dull to take in the extreme magnitude of a creed having so many followers, or he was perverse by nature. He certainly had a morsel to think about which could not be disposed of in a moment. If there was only some way that church membership might be professed by degrees, he might be able to have a favorable word sent back to the surrogate in the East. As it was, he was anything but hopeful that he would ever inherit the property.

CHAPTER XVI.

A MATURE DECISION.

When the official announcement came, with the surrogate's seal upon it, Thorpe felt the inducement held forth by the dead man most keenly. He had loved and revered him while living, and he must do so now that he was gone. But the word had come from an honest soul, and could he, Thorpe, be anything but honest in considering its terms? He discussed the point with his wife, and each talk ended with their retreating within themselves again to think further upon it. To less earnest people than they grave doubts might have ensued and perhaps made them fretful. But as it was it no more than made them sad by spells, then secretly thankful that their relative had been so thoughtful of them.

So largely a business matter was this, that Thorpe resolved to ask Mr. Hedger's advice. So he sought out his employer one morning soon after his arrival at the office. Hedger smiled at Thorpe's words, and said half humorously:

"Can't profess a little religion now, and take the bounty, eh? Worse men than you have joined entire churches for the mere money there is in it. Well, you want me to advise you, I take it. I could very easily tell you what would be my position if I were similarly situated. The wealth of India couldn't buy a single conviction of mine. But you must decide for yourself, and you will find it so in the end. No man can cut his pattern by that of another, never," and Hedger clinched the remark by a decided shake of his head.

"But I understand from a reliable source that I am not so far from being a Christian now," argued Thorpe.

Hedger looked sharply up at first, then began to shake with laughter. "A Christian?" he echoed. "Well, well, I would there

were more Christians in the land. There is an ocean of bounty piling up everywhere for simon-pure Christianity. But it gets but few takers, more's the pity. You know what I mean?"

"Yes; but where must one look for a real Christian?" questioned Thorpe.

"Where? Oh, sometimes in the slums of poverty, and sometimes in the churches. You run onto them accidentally, as it were. They never go labeled, you know."

While Thorpe appreciated the time Hedger was giving in his behalf, he found when he had left him that his own views of the case had been but slightly improved. So that night he and his wife resolved upon a new plan entirely. They would go into their chapel and ask the question mentally. This they did, and with Hero, like a grand old sentinel, lying before them, they looked long and earnestly into the crystal, and after this bowed their heads in silence and thought. When they emerged from here no word was spoken upon the subject, but somehow a slight inner rest had come to them both.

When Thorpe went out to give Hero his bed, he took the animal's great head in his hands and looked him steadfastly in the eye.

"Hero, my good fellow," he said, "have you no word of counsel for us?"

Something like a look of human sympathy came into Hero's face. He gave a low whine, and two great tears trickled from his eyes.

"Well done, my dear, good soul! You have told me volumes. Human words have much of self in them after all, but you are all that heaven has made you, a true friend to both man and angels. Good-night, Hero. In the morning we may both see the light more clearly."

But in the midst of his busiest moments at the store occasional clouds would come into Thorpe's presence, and he would have to stop for a moment to collect himself. He longed to lay the matter before Doctor Wade, and in time this longing became a resolution to do so, even though it seemed hardly just to annoy him with pure matters of business. That night he went to his

house, and the Doctor received him with his usual smile of good cheer.

"And so you find it hard to become a Christian, do you?" he asked, much as Hedger had begun his sally at the office. "Now, in casting up a column of figures do you ever make mistakes?"

"Sometimes."

"What do you do then?"

"Add the column over again."

"And when you have it right, what do you do then?"

"I set down the result."

"Set it down as a certainty, do you; an undisputed fact that needs no reasoning to make it a fact?" Thorpe bowed his assent. "Well, that is mathematics, the study of which brings into play the mechanism of the brain. Every lower element, we must admit, has its higher correspondence. There must be, then, a heart mathematics, a soul mathematics, and so on up the scale indefinitely. Now, if you attempt to square a number, and do not use the right multiple, there is a mistake in the product. You are now, it

seems, attempting to square yourself with a creed, but do not succeed, for your product is wrong. Geometric lines cross your horizon which seem cold and unfeeling. Yet mathematics is a true science every time. So far as the churches are concerned, there is a world of truth contained in them. The earth would have been barren without them. Your relative has sunned himself in the light of his faith, and has doubtless passed out into a realm of supreme happiness. You might not have found even warmth in that same sunshine. He sets you a problem to solve, which you take up as you would a fact in geometry. Your knowledge of rules is lacking. You doubt yourself, and then go farther from the mark. Now, why not return once more to first principles, and consult the book of Justice. Which do you need most, your relative's land, or your personal freedom?"

"I need them both; but I have been told that I am almost a Christian now."

"Has any man a right to tell you that? Better by far that you be deceived into the

belief that you are a pagan. Terms never stand for truth. If you are at peace with your soul, you are a man, as God intended you should be. When you are in doubt you are influenced by self. Is not your own conception of right sufficiently clear to enable you to judge for yourself?"

Thorpe's eyes fell, but in his soul a warmth was gathering. His happiness would have been complete had he never heard of his uncle's bequest. It was the thorn of indecision that had tempted him. Instantly he felt the inner promptings of his heart, and he was half a mind to confide an immediate decision to his friend and counselor. But he endeavored to preserve a prudent silence, and go farther into the inner temple for light. He had received some valuable suggestions; the lesson itself he must needs work out for himself.

"I feel that we must make our own choice in the matter," replied Thorpe, "but I thank you none the less for the light you have given me. One does not care to make mistakes, you know."

"You will make no mistake, Mr. Thorpe. Trust your better selves for that," and the Doctor smiled graciously.

It was not yet late in the evening, so Thorpe hurried home to be present during "chapel hour," as they had grown to call it. He found his wife in a very agreeable mood, some settled conviction having come upon her already. Had she not intuitively found the pearl of content which he had been seeking from others?

"My mind is made up," he hastened to say, in answer to the inquiring look she gave him.

"And the property will be declined," she guessed.

"With most devout thanks, certainly. Real wealth does not consist in landed titles. I will write a pleasing letter of apology to the surrogate myself in the morning."

For the first time there came upon the crystal a scene that night, which, but for breaking faith with our friends, we would describe herewith fully. But it must suffice to say that some mysterious light of love

and resignation sat upon their faces before they retired. It may have been the peace that cometh out of a righteous heart at times when earthly trials are overcome.

CHAPTER XVII.

OF THE NEW FAITH.

The third evening that Mr. Servetus met with the Thorpes he broached the subject of spiritual growth to them, when they had returned to the parlor after their hour of meditation in the chapel.

"You are of course aware that this completes my regular visits here, and now, if you please, I would like to impress certain thoughts upon your minds, as possible means of safety hereafter. You are right in the belief that just now the world is alive with the marvelous. Great enterprises are being gone into, war is conducted upon grand and elaborate lines, while into the psychic realm many, very many, are taking their first peeps, and the air is full of wonders and rumors of wonders. I can not deny that these crudities in phenomena have not

had their use. But enough of any one thing is best. Minds which do not need the phenomena of twenty or thirty years ago are to-day unfortunately pursuing them to a most dangerous extent. We ought to be wise enough to know that there is something more reliable right within us of vastly greater import. The sick man goes from doctor to doctor and cries aloud for relief. Relief could be had by a mere honest appeal to his inner self. Lovers of truth, in their enthusiasm, hear of some new and marvellous phenomena, and journey hence as if their lives depended upon it. The phenomena witnessed, there comes a sensibility to them of having been cheated. However startling the manifestation, conviction comes not with it, and they are after all obliged to look within and up to God for the real support. Our asylums for the insane are filling up with many such. It is the old weakness of mankind of trusting too much to the outward senses. When the sixth sense shall have been developed, the gross in life will have little charms for us.

“Men make newspapers upon plans provided by their readers. The public shouts for sensation, and it gets sensation. If pure philosophy were craved, they would get that instead. Like the use of intoxicants, one drink induces another, and each time it must be a little stronger, to appease a humored appetite. So with our dealings with psychic phenomena. No adept ever reached the goal of content because of his powers to perform a wonder. His occult powers are purely secondary. His real powers are subtle and never appear upon the surface. So we can all be instruments in the higher and more spiritual attainment. In your chapel is a battery of silent forces. In time it will be as much isolated from the world as if it were in the primeval forests. You will feel these forces the moment you enter there, but these forces will not manifest themselves in phenomena. You would not degrade your work by looking for such manifestations. If you do not, and certain casual revealments do come, do not talk of them to others. If you do, outside

thoughts will be thrown against you, to hinder and obstruct. Learn the efficacy of silence. You will in the future find yourselves ready to speak at the right moment, as if with inspired tongues. He that gives forth to everybody scatters his odylie forces and loses himself. Speak calmly, without passion, and never argue a point. Argument is exasperating and never profitable. Look well to the little things of life, rather than to the accomplishment of great things. The patient soul is rich in seeming peace.

“Now, my friends, I will need to leave you to your work. Here are the names of two initiates of the cause, whom I wish you to invite into your chapel twice each week. One of them, the gentleman, is a brother of our Order, the other a beginner like yourselves. When these members of your lodge are secured you will readily find three more to make the desired seven. If you wish advice at any time, come to me and I will freely give it. I am sure I shall wish you Godspeed in all you do.”

With only the parting yet to be spoken, Mr. Servetus went away carrying with him a quiet but thankful amen from his friends. His devotion to his chosen cause had indeed been rare and effective.

When Sunday came the remembrance of Mr. Gracey's invitation for him to attend his church came back to Thorpe, and, most surprising to himself, he felt moved to go there. Accordingly he invited his wife to accompany him, to which she consented most willingly, for before their home life had become so barren they went to church from habit. Now, indeed, they might go for some reason even more commendable.

It was a marked innovation for both Mr. and Mrs. Thorpe. When the usher showed them up the aisle, some feeling of spiritual uplifting came upon them. The arched dome, the stained glass in the windows, the atmosphere of perfect rest about them seemed charmingly to accord with their feelings. When the organ pealed forth its entrancing tones, the spiritual vibrations were intense. Why had they never noticed

this before? Mr. Gracey arose and prayed like one inspired. The choir sang in tones of united praise, and the hymn, told forth from many hundred throats, seemed fairly burdened with the message of love. Mrs. Thorpe could scarcely keep back the tears of her thanksgiving. Her husband's hand involuntarily touched hers, and through the sermon they sat as if once more united with the healing of perfect oneness.

Mr. Gracey had evidently espied them in the audience, and as if from some new inspiration his words came thick and fast. His subject was "Life, Its Struggles and Its Uses." Life is dear, and its rewards but just and ennobling, if we do not pervert them by an adherence to mammon's caprices. "Breathe out hate, breathe in love, breathe out error, breathe in truth; the vintage of the world's harvest is great, and the tireless laborers therein are few; but the time cometh when the light of a new millenium shall break forth upon an enraptured world."

These were his words, which came leaping down upon the heads of the audience, and scores of faces therein looked up in humble but genuine submission. It was a moment of deep and ennobling pathos. Mr. Gracey came hurriedly down at the close of the service and shook the hands of his new hearers. He thanked them for coming and invited them to continue to come. Just as they had reached the sidewalk a gentle touch upon his shoulder caused Thorpe to turn about. It was a surprise to him to find Doctor Wade standing beside them.

"Indeed!" said Thorpe, "and were you present with us?"

"It was my much-coveted privilege to go to church this morning. I see you are both looking well," commented the Doctor, lifting his hat to Mrs. Thorpe.

"You must know we came by special invitation," smiled Thorpe, finding the Doctor willing to walk along beside them. "And a grand sermon it was. Mr. Gracey seems truly inspired."

"So with hundreds of other preachers of

the day," returned the Doctor. "Such men may be said to be quite ahead of their times. The trouble is, the people, many of them, have not waked up. The man of sermons does not dare to keep too far ahead of them."

"Because of his love of popularity?" asked Thorpe.

"I do not think so," and the Doctor reflected a moment. "He may be truly illumined, as many of his hearers are, but there is a conservative class that is yet wedded to the old idol of fear. They go through their ritual of belief much as the parrot learns to speak certain words and phrases, but because, also like the parrot, they do not understand the new explorations into the spiritual realm, they declare that no such place exists. It is heaven with streets paved with gold with them, or nothing. This is the rank materialism existing in the churches to-day. But by the law of succession the new element coming up in our midst will have a freedom in years to come that neither you nor I can predict."

"Mr. Gracey spoke so feelingly of the new

light even now about us," remarked Mrs. Thorpe.

"And well he might. A church which gets well attended to-day is no longer a church, in fact, but a fertile bed for the propagation of advanced ideas; and the minister who ties himself to the orthodox plank, or to intellectual oratory, merely, will soon find himself without a congregation."

"I have an idea that intellectuality has already parted company with religion," speculated Thorpe.

"I feel certain it has," replied the Doctor, thoughtfully. "The audience here to-day, you may have noticed, fairly craved the gospel of the heart. This craving acted as an incentive for Mr. Gracey, for, being a man of fine intuitive qualities, he was moved to speak from the heart. Had he given them an intellectual treat, however able, the response would have been most meager and solitary. Intellect does well enough in our schools and colleges, but when the field of experience opens to the

preacher of the period, he must court the gospel of the heart, and not of the head. Our ablest ministers seldom ever refer to great men, but take, perhaps, the simplest act of a child, or of an humble servant of man, and picture magnificent lessons of the true Christ to the people who need them."

"I do believe Mr. Gracey one of that sort," said Mrs. Thorpe, enthusiastically.

"Already we have a foretaste of the minister of the future right here in Mr. Gracey," agreed the Doctor. "In time creed will fade out entirely, and the better and steadier light of united love will at last become popular. Ministers, like authors, are too much praised, and the result is they become too great in their own eyes. Self among public teachers must be wholly put aside. Our ministers who pride themselves upon their intellectual knowledge, fire above their audience, and when the empty pews increase in number before them they harshly misjudge a people who never are or can be intellectual. Preachers are for the masses, and should not pose as champions of great

men. I take it that the great man of the past will not be the great man of the future. The day of Personality is gone by. Hero worship must cease, for it is being discovered that the real hero is not he who takes a city by force. Civilization must enter its second childhood and grow again to a better manhood and womanhood. Then a king will be of no more account than a peasant. Universal good-will shall be the measure of true profit in the creed of the future. This shall be the literal second coming of Christ, which must take place before the hopes of the great Brotherhood can be realized. And we are nearer to it to-day than we suppose. We are now merely quarreling over terms, that is all. When we become truly spiritual terms will count for nothing, and the past claims of the many religions will at last lose their identities in the better realm of common good."

They had stopped upon a street corner, and the Doctor, earnest in finishing his discourse, still stood talking with them. As

he reached this point, however, he politely bade his friends good-day, and took another route for home. When the Thorpes reached their home they found Hero sunning himself upon the front step, and as they approached him, he looked up at them as if to read their thoughts.

"It is all right, Hero. The world do move and we are all going swimmingly along with the crowd. Eh, my old master?" and Thorpe stroked the animal upon his neck. In ready obeisance, Hero arose and gave a single little bark of response.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HERO TO THE RESCUE.

To complete the circle of seven was not a work of many days. But the circumstances which led up to it were in some respects remarkable. The member of the Brotherhood recommended by Mr. Servetus was Colonel Isaac Risley, a gentleman of mature years and pleasing ways. The other person was Miss Harriet Ames, a maiden lady better known among her friends as Aunt Harriet, because of her numerous personal attachments, especially among the children. Colonel Risley was far advanced in occult learning. He was mirthful, yet seriously in earnest—a sort of sunny temperament at odds with nobody, but genially willing that the more unfavorable things of life should be passed by, for the reason that to him there was vastly more

sunshine than shadow in life as he found it. His business was that of an expert civil engineer, and he enjoyed a good patronage and was widely and favorably known.

Miss Ames was naturally inclined to mystical teachings, was deeply intuitive, and a most apt reader of human nature. She was a marked character among those who knew her best. Her hair for some reason had turned white in early life, and her face was such as belonged to an aged and fervent soul. Because of some peculiar phase of destiny she had never found her exact mate, since mateship implied so much more to her than it did to the more ordinary classes of women. But she had grown wise in her solitude, and lovable. No better selection than she and Colonel Risley could have been found.

Mr. Thorpe visited them personally and found them only too anxious to meet at their lodge-room, hence it took but a few preliminaries to complete the arrangements.

We can justly surmise that two others of the circle were Robert Fletcher and his

young wife, both of whom had already learned much of occult teachings through Doctor Wade. They also stood quite ready to begin a work so agreeable to them as this. But when the number had been counted, still another member was needed to complete the seven. Thorpe was about to consult Mr. Servetus again, when an incident occurred almost too incredible to be told. One morning Hero was missing. A suspicion came at once into his friends' minds that his mission was ended and that he had gone. But how sudden and unexpected an event if this were true. Mrs. Thorpe several times that day went out and looked longingly up and down the street, as she would have done had she been expecting a long absent human friend.

But with the vision of second sight, let us follow Hero on his ramblings, though a course so unusual may be somewhat outside the province of the modern story-teller. Just at sunrise he had set off toward the city at a steady, ambling trot, as if led by

some keen instinct of the moment. He at first traversed a wide circuit of the city, and occasionally stopped to sniff the air, and then he would take up his trot again, and thus the day was far spent before anything came of his mission. Once when he had reached a somewhat dingy street near the railroad districts, there appeared just ahead of him a woman and a girl, the woman of stout build, but the girl of rather young and shrinking manners. The latter seemed to be moving along under the will of her elder, and before they were conscious of the fact, Hero had overtaken them and was walking closely at their heels. Even before they saw him he had intruded his head in between them, and when a proper moment came he gave a low growl of alarm. Instantly, both woman and girl sprang aside and looked down at Hero in dismay. At the woman Hero cast a savage look, but instantly turned about and expressed a marked friendliness for the girl. In the confusion of the moment, and from a sort

of helpless indecision, the maiden permitted him to approach her and lick her hand. When the woman would attempt to approach, Hero would warn her off, then turn and renew his friendliness toward the girl. It was evident from the first that some spell which had existed between the woman and girl had been broken. In a half-frightened mood the girl started up the street alone, though the woman called authoritatively to her. At each attempt to persuade her to stop, Hero would turn back at her and drive her farther away. Singularly enough, the maiden received Hero's protection somewhat as a matter of course, and when she was at last out of sight of her late companion, she walked idly along at his side, her hand at times involuntarily resting upon his shaggy neck. She seemed to have no particular object or destination except to follow, in a listless obedience, her brute protector. It was a long and tiresome walk, but by the middle of the afternoon more surprised than ever was Mrs. Thorpe at hearing the paw of Hero scratching at the side

door, as upon the first day of his coming to them. It seemed he had not induced the girl to enter the yard, but she was standing somewhat forlornly out upon the walk when Mrs. Thorpe opened the door. He gave a low whine, and a glance out at his charge. Then he evinced an outburst of joy which only a dog is capable of without words.

"What is it, Hero?" asked Mrs. Thorpe, puzzled to understand it all. In reply, Hero bounded out to the girl's side and stole his friendly head in among the folds of her dress. "Won't you come in, please?" inquired Mrs. Thorpe, seeing the girl's hesitating manners.

With some reluctance the girl followed Hero toward the house, and he would not cease his demonstrations of delight until she had spoken to his mistress.

Mrs. Thorpe felt that this peculiar event meant something, so when the girl came up the steps she kindly invited her into the house.

"Can you not tell me what it means?" she asked, still in a kindly tone.

"I scarcely know what it means," replied the girl, seemingly half frightened at the liberties she was taking. "I followed him a long ways," she said, half dreamily. She looked tired and most forlorn. This excited Mrs. Thorpe's deepest sympathies. In a brief time she had told how she came to follow Hero, and the part he took in separating her from the woman.

"And who was the woman?" asked Mrs. Thorpe.

"Indeed, I do not know." Then a tinge of shame seemed to creep into the girl's face and she hung her head for a moment in silence. At last she looked up and said rather incoherently: "I was at work in a factory on the west side, but last week the factory shut down and everybody was thrown out of work. A strange woman met me on the street and offered me a place, but I staid in her house but one night. I saw dreadful things there — terrible-looking men, and I think the women were bad too. Early in the morning I ran away and went to an intelligence office to ask for work. A

woman came in while I was there and promised me work if I would go with her. I was going along with her when the dog came up and drove the woman away. I am sure I don't know what it means," she said, sadly, drooping her eyes. When her gaze at last wandered toward Hero, who had squatted upon a mat in the room, a haggard smile lighted her features, and Hero began pounding the floor with his tail in a most heroic fashion.

Mrs. Thorpe had begun the day with other perplexities than that caused by the disappearance of Hero. One of these was the fact that her domestic, a somewhat roving sort of girl, had suddenly left her; but now, if there was any such thing as fatality, might not this very circumstance have been a part of the day's plan? Like many little difficulties in life over which we borrow so much useless trouble, this entire happening might yet prove a blessing. The coming of the girl at this moment, the valiant conduct of Hero, her evident opportunity to befriend a forlorn sister of earth, may all have been a

lesson well worth heeding. Further inquiry elicited the fact that the girl was wholly homeless, and by a wise hand of Providence must certainly have been saved from a living death by Hero's timely interference. Mrs. Thorpe looked searchingly over at Hero, in answer to which Hero arose and laid his faithful head in her lap.

"Well done, my noble fellow," she said, stroking his neck with beaming fondness. "You shall both of you have the best lunch the house affords," and suiting her action to the word, she arose and went out into the kitchen. Tears sprang to the girl's eyes, and she sobbed now most forlornly. Hero went over to her and laid his head in her lap, and his generous sympathies soon seemed to quiet her grief.

When Mr. Thorpe came home that night a most incredible story had his wife to tell him. Marvels were fast following marvels, and when might they cease? Thorpe questioned the girl, and the more he talked with her the more deeply interested did he become. She seemed to be a most peculiar be-

ing. Occasionally her ways seemed absent and neglectful. Her words would suddenly cease in the middle of a sentence, when she would seem to retreat within herself until aroused by the words of others. She was poorly clad, and pale from overwork and privations. But she had a sweet face, a pleasing light in her eyes, and an almost winning grace in her voice. Once before they retired that night she was looking dreamily down at Hero, who was lying at her feet.

"But that is not his name," she murmured in a sorrowful tone of musing. "His name is not Hero—" then she paused and looked abashed for a moment. "I didn't mean it at all. I guess I was dreaming," she said, correcting herself. What, indeed, could she have known of Hero?

On the following day Colonel Risley had occasion to call upon Mr. Thorpe at the store to arrange further for their first meeting at the latter's house. Thorpe, of course, took occasion to relate to him the strange coming of the girl.

"Don't think me superstitious," said the Colonel, laughing, "but there is a wise hand in all this, rest assured. Why, sir, she must have been sent to you for a purpose. Something tells me to say it; and, too, do you not see that to take her into the circle the number is complete?"

Thorpe wondered that this had not occurred to him as well. "She is a strange creature, I do say," he pondered. "She shall be one of us if she will."

"And to-morrow night we can meet with a full quorum," suggested the Colonel, most cheerfully.

"To-morrow night," agreed Thorpe, and the two men shook hands with a deep mutual satisfaction.

And so came the eventful night. Robert Fletcher and his wife had been the first to arrive, Miss Harriet Ames next, and Colonel Risley last. The coming together of this splendid battery of minds and motives was a fortunate circumstance from the first. Before chapel hour a lively conversation upon current topics took place, in which all

felt free to express themselves. Miss Harriet had been reading of a noted magazine writer who had killed herself by jumping from a third-story window.

"And such a talented soul," she remarked, a little sadly. "I am at a loss to account for a death like that."

"Are you? Please let me give my views upon the subject," said the Colonel, to whose words all listened attentively. "I admire what Mabel Collins has to say upon life and its attainments." With this the speaker drew a small volume from his pocket and turned its leaves until he found his place. "You doubtless all realize that a purely literary person lives in constant danger of bodily annihilation. The force such a mind draws to himself is marvelous. Such a force he must use prudently, or it will react upon him. This is especially true of a person who produces a justly celebrated reformatory work. The world is startled, pleased, entertained or mystified, and a perfect fury of praises are heaped upon the writer's head. All this I believe to be a

cruel dealing from the public mind, which seems not so much as conscious that the genius producing the book may never produce its like again. But if you please, let me read the exact words of Mabel Collins. She says, 'Not twice can the same cup of pleasure be tasted. The second time it must contain either a grain of poison or a drop of the elixir of life. The same argument holds good with regard to intellectual pleasures. We see men who are the flower of their age in intellect, who pass beyond their fellows and tower over them, entering at last upon a fatal treadmill of thought, where they yield to the innate idleness of the soul and begin to delude themselves by the solace of repetition. Then comes the barrenness and lack of vitality, that unhappy and disappointing state into which great men too often enter when middle life is just passed. The fire of youth, the vigor of the young intellect, conquers the inner inertia and makes the man scale heights of thought and fill his mental lungs with the free air of the mountains. But then at

last the physical reaction sets in; the physical machinery of the brain loses its powerful impetus, simply because the youth of the body is at an end. Now the man is assailed by the great tempter of the race who stands forever on the ladder of life waiting for those who climb so far. He drops the poisoned drop into the ear, and from that moment all consciousness takes on a dullness, and the man becomes terrified lest life is losing its possibilities for him. He rushes back onto a familiar platform of experience, and there finds comfort in touching a well-known chord of passion or emotion. But at last his fate is the same as that of the gormand and the drunkard. The power of the spell lessens daily as the machinery which feels loses its vitality; and the man endeavors to revive the old excitement and fervor by striking the note more violently, by hugging the thing that makes him feel, by drinking the cup of poison to its fatal dregs. Life has no longer any meaning for him, and he rushes wildly into the abysses of intellectual insanity.'

Can anything be more to the point?" asked the Colonel, archly.

"Repetition is the bane of the intellect," remarked Fletcher.

"It is a veritable yet uncertain poison," agreed the Colonel. "For instance, when a master mind strikes the keynote of life, and places great truths before the world, it is by no means an evidence that he can do as well again in just that same capacity. The proof is rather to the contrary. But the basely material demands of our hero-worshippers with abnormal appetites are so great, that the overpowered genius is beseechingly implored to give forth more of the same, and no one less than a true mystic can withstand such sincere and voluptuous flattery. Again he sets out to woo the muse, and though he may succeed fairly well this time, the third attempt is a failure outright. And the disappointment of the reading public is not a thousandth part as great as that of the author's. His work has become that of the treadmill indeed. He suffers sleepless nights, barren

but secret thoughts of condemnation are thrown against him from everywhere, and he begins to hate the very life which was recently so full of promise for him. I have no doubt this authoress you speak of took her life because of this very condition of her being. Fame is a bitter ransom at best. Had she laid down her pen and waited for a new phase of life to open to her, along with this phase might have appeared much to bid her live. It might be a work wholly different from literary pursuits. We are constantly changing from one phase to another, but each phase is a step higher in the scale of right living. This is the will of God made manifest."

"And you might say as much of all public workers," remarked Mr. Thorpe. "I have known eminent orators to go down upon their self-conscious realizations of public approval. They are spoiled and made gods, and when they are gods they are less men than ever."

The Colonel, with his native good-humor, heartily enjoyed his friend's apt approval

of the views he had just expressed. Miss Ames was also charmed by the Colonel's logic. Her deepened nature, sympathetic to the last degree, but self-poised and justifiable, was capable of appropriating every word he had spoken, while her mind was also capable of adding more interesting proof upon the subject.

"I look upon the picture of a suicide as a truly lamentable one," she said, quietly. "I believe there never was a case of self-murder that could be called justifiable. It is a most dire misunderstanding of life; for, when we get farther into the mysteries of the true life there is less cause for complaint for what comes to us. We grow restless from habit, and so drive away our better and more potent inner promptings."

"I am sure our domestic spheres are never made happier by battling against life as we find it," remarked Mrs. Thorpe. Mrs. Fletcher, on whose pleasant and amiably intelligent face appeared a smile of approval, felt deeply the meaning of Mrs. Thorpe's assertion.

Miss Harriet gave a nod in reply, then said further: "Doctor Hartman in his work on Paracelsus says that those who die premature deaths, either by their own hands or because of some accident, differ greatly from those who die naturally. Although the souls have become separated from their bodies, the spirit does not therefore necessarily leave the soul, but may remain with it until another separation takes place. They rove about much the same as human beings, but without physical bodies, and remain in such a state until the time arrives when, according to the law of Nature, or their own predestination, their physical death should have taken place. How very necessary that we complete our span of life as it is put before us."

While these remarks were being made, only the Colonel had closely observed the peculiarly alert countenance of Sybil Strong, the girl who had so recently and mysteriously been brought into the Thorpe household. The Colonel had a keen eye to

the study of human traits. Since her coming she had gone about in an absent sort of way, something like a person who was living in two worlds at once. She seemed kind and dutiful, but strangely remiss and silent. Now as the talk advanced she seemed to drink in every word, but not as most casual listeners would have done. She seemed to absorb what was said more in the abstract than mentally. The Colonel believed her appreciation, queerly concealed as it was, was not of the ordinary sort. At her feet lay Hero, whose great eyes rested first upon one face, then upon another, as if he, too, felt the power of the living battery present.

The Colonel was about to address a word to the girl, when the hour to go to the lodge-room was announced by Mr. Thorpe. In a few remarks he gave the simple instructions, so that no unnecessary word need be spoken in the chapel. Each seat, which was hereafter to be occupied by its own occupant only, had been placed in position,

the seven chairs arranged in the form of a horseshoe in front of the globe. The sign of the Zodiac under which each person was born was also observed. Aries, the positive sign of the Fire triplicity, came first. This lot fell to Sybil, Mrs. Thorpe, of Leo, next, and Mr. Thorpe, who was of Gemini, next. Mrs. Fletcher, who came fourth, was of Sagittarius, the Colonel next, also of Aries, Miss Ames, of Virgo, while Mr. Fletcher, who completed the other pole of the magnet, was of Cancer. Mr. Thorpe had been instructed to observe these essentials closely, and to permit no change after the first sitting.

A sentence had been selected to be spoken while entering the room, and when all had taken their places each arose and repeated the sentence in concert. We must not fail to mention that Hero's place of honor was given him, which he had taken with an easy pride and bearing.

The face of every person present was a study. Earnestness of purpose, a casting aside of all that was gross, a prayerful up-

lifting to receive the will of the Most High—all these sat pictured in the eyes of every member. It was a beloved moment of divine and gracious love. When the crystal was exposed and the gas turned low, the luminous aura reflected through it from some hidden light had a twofold effulgence. The globe was a mere perquisite at best, but it had a double meaning. No haste, no idle thoughts to disturb the scene, nothing but holy silence throughout the room—was it anything strange that at this hour a truly meritorious work was begun, the outcome of which not the wisest among those present could surmise? All seemed to breathe at once. The all-important condition had been harmony, and the selections of the lodge members had been most excellent ones. At last, and at a sign from Mr. Thorpe, all bowed their heads and closed their eyes in meditation, and watched the promptings that came into their hearts. What magnificent silence! It fairly teemed with vibrations and subtle thought-waves. Few of earth's people realize how

quickly the mystic forces gather when thus invited. One force center like this can reach thousands of minds, and incite them to better deeds and objects in life. It is not a dealing in the psychical, in the so-called marvels of phenomena, but in the higher attainments of the soul, which are at the command of us all if the conditions be but observed. Such a practice develops the habit of looking toward the inner self, rather than upon outside worldly effects.

Then came the usual closing words, after which all repaired once more to the parlor below. Here some further social talk was had, and then the company separated to meet again in a week.

CHAPTER XIX.

A KNIGHT OF THE GRIP.

A rather pleasant experience came into Mr. Thorpe's life in a business way, which we can hardly help relating. His frequent duty was that of buyer for certain lines of goods, and on an extremely warm day and when he sat fanning himself, there seemed to have appeared before him as if by magic the familiar form of Quaint Crippen, traveling salesman for a certain well-known house in Boston. Quaint was a most lovable type of off-hand, smiling, go-as-you-please drummers, whose stock in trade was sunshine and garrulous talk. Thorpe smiled as Quaint reached for his hand.

"Just in the nick of time—waiting for me, were you?" guessed Crippen, dropping his valises with a thud, which only gave a humorous meaning to his words. "Warm?

Well, no, not in the strictest sense. You see I've taken to the new fad of denying everything. I get up in the morning, and imagine I am going to bed. I eat a cold lunch and persuade myself it is piping hot. Thank you, I will sit down. You want to know how trade is, do you? Why, trade's not at all dull on the road. Plenty of business such as it is. Ours is a million-dollar house per month, *ad valorem*, you know. Gracious, man!" and Crippen tapped Thorpe upon his knee, "denims took a tumble last week, cottons knocked off a quarter, and tickings—well, you will do well to consult the markets. I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll write you up an order, weather hot or weather cold, and bundle my thanks in with it, and make 'em ninety days straight. Eh?" and the speaker joyously slipped his order-book from his pocket.

"We're pretty well stocked in most lines," remarked Thorpe, judiciously.

"I do say, my dear friend," began Crippen, taking from his side coat pocket a small case which, because it resembled a case of cigars,

Thorpe dreaded to see. "Here, have one," and the case was held forth invitingly.

Imagine Thorpe's surprise to see, not the antiquated gift of a cigar, but a package of small photographs, very closely resembling Crippen himself.

"Doesn't flatter me one bit, does it? I had 'em taken to see just what a modern crank resembled. That's me, exactly. I've gone daft on reforms. Why, sir, what do you suppose I'm aspiring to be?"

"Couldn't say, surely. Anything from page to president, possibly."

"Spare your guesses, Thorpe. I've actually laid my plans to become a foreign missionary. How does that strike you?"

The senior member of the firm happened to be passing just then, and hearing Crippen's last sentence he naturally halted and looked around.

"Hedger, how are you—glad to see you looking so well," and the drummer arose and saluted the merchant with an abandon of good cheer. "Sit down a moment, won't you. I was just telling Thorpe a secret.

You see I don't peddle these things everywhere. I was merely stating my aspirations. Every drummer has 'em occasionally, if I do say it."

Hedger laughed and was apparently not very busy just then, so he sort of half seated himself upon a stool, as if the condescension would need to cost him a trifle at least.

"A cut-and-dried foreign missionary—how's that? Not one of the old sort, you see," and Crippen laughed with a sly grimace of understanding. "I had the good luck to attend the world's Parliament of Religions last year, and if you will let me tell the story, hang me if I didn't carry away with me an idea. Fact, Hedger, a tangible, every-day idea of my own. You see I was brought up to contribute to the fund to reclaim the heathen, and every penny I dropped into the box even in my boyhood I said grace over, and wondered just how many heathen my single copper was going to save. But in after years I became a traveling salesman, and hardened to almost

everything that makes a fellow hard, and somehow I forgot the heathen entirely."

"And now you mean to turn missionary, do you say?"

"When I get cash enough. You think it a queer sort of notion, do you? Well, really, it strikes me as rather queer on the whole. Occasionally when I steal a glance down upon that picture of mine, I don't wonder much. I've quite a penchant for certain little fads, innocent though they be as fads go. I never smoke, chew or drink—promised my good old mother years ago I wouldn't do such things, so now they single me out as a tramp who is a little off, that is all; though if I had to follow any other calling I believe I should starve—except, as I say, I might do the missionary act to perfection. What do you say, Hedger?"

"Can you pray?"

"Every breath I draw is a prayer. I go out and look up at the sunlight and feel like a boy who wants to shout. Isn't that your doctrine?"

"Why do you espouse the cause of the heathen?"

"I'll tell you why. I heard a Hindu at the religious congress say something that set me to thinking. He gave me a tip that didn't seem so dreadfully, awfully heathenish. To be sure, he found some fault with certain Christian men who are sent over to his country to reform his countrymen, and if all he says is true I don't blame him for what he said. Possibly he didn't appreciate a religion that supplies the place of all other religions; I couldn't say as to that. I am not as well posted as some."

Thorpe, to conceal his mirth at all this running on, made a feint to mark a few figures upon a tablet he had in his hand.

"By the way, Thorpe, while you are at it, make it a dozen cases. Freight rates are clear down, you know. I'll tell you what I'll do on a dozen straight in a minute." Then he turned to Hedger. "Well, I've been investigating the subject, and blame me if I haven't got what you might call a clear-cut idea of my own. That's legitimate, isn't it?"

Hedger nodded. "It seems those so-called missionaries do not go to India in a spirit of gentleness and reasoning, but go reviling everything that isn't cut by their exact pattern. The Hindu tells us that these same good servants of the Lord misrepresent the result of their work, and bring home fabulous tales of the thousands of souls they save. However, be that as it may, this is what I propose: to go over to India with an olive branch in my button-hole, and bend my energies to make everybody feel good, somehow, some way—I don't know just how it can be done. For instance, if I see a fellow down in the world and his fellow chums giving him a push into the gutter, I'd just go to him and sort of lift him up, take a few shekels out of my spending money and get him a square meal or a pair of hose, or shake his hand and look him in the eye and ask him if I can do anything more."

"You wouldn't look after his spiritual welfare, then?"

"Yes, I'd do that, too. You see, if those people worship at all it means that they have divinity smuggled in about them somewhere. I don't care whether they worship God or a stone. Worship means that even a heathen aspires to something higher. When I go over there I will take blessed little religion with me, but join in and be a heathen with them. I should kneel before a pagan god and pray like a hero, if needs be, until the roof lifts off the pagan idol's head, and then I will join hands with both Hindu and Brahmin and implore them to keep right on and I will be with them to the bitter end. Hale fellows well met we'd be, as the old saying goes."

"And then?"

"Why, if out of pure curiosity they should suspicion that we people at home believed in anything rational, I'd just go down into my memory and try and recall some really deserving work being done by the Christian brethren, and give 'em a dose of that. Don't you see, they might mistake me for a sample Christian and perhaps get their eyes open

to the fact that we are not so bad a set as they have grown to believe."

Hedger shook with laughter and seemed not at all incapable of imagining the figure of an average commercial drummer, with his heart bigger than his head, kneeling before a pagan god.

"But just a minute, Mr. Hedger," said Crippen, seeing the merchant about to go. "I've a blessed good mind to think seriously upon the subject, really. This is no chaff I am giving you; you don't think it is?"

"When have you an idea you will start?"

"Oh, not for some time yet. If I get in fair sales I might replenish my purse so as to be able to start in a year. Can't travel without money, you know. I was just saying to Thorpe that the markets are off several points and that now's the time to buy."

It would have been hard to have told whether the look which now came upon Hedger's face called for a sigh or a secret thought of incredulity. After a sharp look into the speaker's eyes, he arose and said smilingly to Thorpe:

"Denims and Mill B tickings are both staple goods, so you had better make up a liberal order. And, Crippen, before you start for Bombay, please drop me a card."

"Won't care to go along, will you?"

"Possibly; there's no telling when I shall run afoul of some such idea myself. We are only mortals at best."

"A grand old soul is that man Hedger," soliloquized Crippen, watching the retreating figure of the merchant. "Worse men than he have had their passports to the blissful city sent them on silver trays, with a kind-hearted preacher to pronounce the benediction at that. I've an abundance of use for just such men as Hedger," and with an air of one who is loath to return to mundane things, Crippen heaved a sort of stifled sigh, then with a genuine solemnity he let his eyes drop upon his order-book.

The order written down, Crippen said further: "Do you see that tear in my coat? Well, you will doubtless be surprised to know that just before I came in here I had the queerest sort of adventure. But before

I tell you about it, I want to ask you if you have ever noticed the appearance of a person whose spirit has left his body, and only the soul moves the shell about. Of course you have; you find them everywhere. For instance, there is the old and wealthy gentleman whose activity has ceased years ago, and who walks about the earth with a wan face, a purposeless air, as if waiting for the time to cease walking altogether. Nobody cares to speak to him, he draws nobody to him, and people get into the habit of wishing he were out of the way wholly. They can't help it. The live, active soul is the one who gets sought out and is mourned when he is gone. We traveling men study human nature by the wickedest sort of scale; that is our reputation, at least."

"You must find splendid opportunities for the sifting of character on the road," agreed Thorpe.

"Well, we do," mused Crippen. Then he aroused himself and said with more spirit: "But the incident I was going to relate to you. I was just crossing State street, hus-

ting to get out of the way of a cable car myself, when in a twinkle I saw that the car was about to run straight over one of those spiritless beings who was walking beside me. In a jiffy I flung my grips ahead of me and grabbed the poor fellow and fairly dragged him out of danger. Now, do you know that if I hadn't done this there would have been a funeral at my aged friend's house, and no mistake? So rudely did I handle him that he grabbed me with the clutch of a fiend, tore my coat, and for a moment it was almost impossible for me to free myself from him. When he was at last made to see his danger, without so much as a word he gathered himself up and went trudging on the same as before. Now, I say, Thorpe, suppose this same very nice and innocent old gentleman had been killed; would there really have been a death? We say the man's spirit has gone, been gone for years. Wasn't the departure of his spirit the real death?"

"I could not have thought that metaphys-

ical studies were in your line," reasoned Thorpe.

"Don't know that they are; but I do like the man or woman with lots of vibratory thrill and motion. It keeps things going, so to speak. I can tell the moment I look into a man's eye how much spirit he has. If he has none I very naturally pass him by and hurry on to catch up with the fellow who has a magnetic presence about him. Don't you?"

Thorpe enjoyed the running on of the salesman, and before the business was closed he believed he had found in him much to admire, though it was certainly contained in a rough exterior.

"I enjoy the person of vigor, surely. We all do that," said Thorpe, approvingly. He had the order for Crippen now fully made out, had had it copied in the letter press, so, handing it to him, he said:

"There, that will help swell your aggregate sales for to-day, at least. You may thank Mr. Hedger for that."

"My good friend," quoth Crippen, quite solemnly, and rising to shake hands, "I'm a thousand times obliged to Hedger. Remember me to him, please, and say to him that all men pray after a fashion of their own, mostly. Don't be surprised if Hedger and I should be chums in the Orient some day. Stranger things than that have happened. Good-day to you," and Crippen hustled out with his two grips in the jolliest manner.

CHAPTER XX.

SEEKING FOR GUIDANCE.

The work of the Thorpe household, having now found its completeness, was one of varied experiences as well. Two months passed quickly by, and slowly but surely were the gates of wisdom opening to the seven earnest souls who continued to meet weekly in the mystic lodge-room. Aside from the distinctly occult developments which came to them, Mrs. Thorpe's success in her art studies was altogether surprising. Before entering the new life she had painted for the love of effect; now she was capable of seeking the higher and broader unfoldment of her soul, and the work which appeared beneath her brush was correspondingly fine and original. In colors she saw new meanings. It was not the mere putting together of lights and shades, but the truer

commingling of the spiritual blendings, a touch, perhaps, of that divine inspiration which moved the old masters to produce their wonderful works upon canvas. Thus art became to Mrs. Thorpe, along with the other knowledge she was attaining, a decided proof that if one steadily polarizes toward any desired end, especially if it be a worthy one, that end will and can be attained. But the entire spiritual law must be recognized. The laws of health, of morality, of industry and purpose—all these must be never forsaken by him who would even so much as lift the veil which hides the inner from the outer realm.

Mr. Thorpe's particular phase of progress had been the quickening of his intuitive powers. In business life he had become every day more successful. He was beginning to discover a more than surface meaning to the active, hurried, bustling world of commerce. Glad impulses would flash into his heart, even during his busiest moments, and these were already causing a look of tranquillity to rest upon his features. In

every human trait of those he met he saw some good, and no person was wholly good or wholly bad. By preserving his self-poise, his silent, inner balance, he found he could perform each week more work than on the previous week, and perform it more satisfactorily. He discovered that men need not necessarily become so absorbed in business but that they can give it its distinct place as a mere incidental in life; that the most successful man was he who locked his business cares in his office, and in no sense was he a business man until he again entered there. Thus two separate existences can be lived at once. True, this had been a hard lesson for Mr. Thorpe to learn, but it was all the more valuable for it.

But along with all this favorable growth, some peculiar difficulties were creeping in here and there, which were at times very hard to master. We will mention only one of these. The coming of Sybil Strong into the family seemed to have a profound meaning which they may not yet have fathomed. The girl had without doubt been guided

hither for a purpose, though the wisdom of this might many times have been doubted. She appeared sad by spells, even morose and willful, and strange moods would overtake her in the midst of some household duty, and perhaps she would leave her work wholly undone. This made her most unreliable and troublesome as a domestic assistant. Out of her sleep she would awaken and give forth broken sentences without meaning or connection. Once while attempting to write, strange characters and scrawlings appeared upon her paper, and her hand became quite unmanageable. Knockings came upon the headboard of her bed, and other like annoyances would disturb her while she sat alone with Mrs. Thorpe.

These unexplained developments had only recently appeared, and finding themselves unable to understand them, Mr. and Mrs. Thorpe resolved to lay the matter before Doctor Wade, a habit they could not easily forego when problems like this came up.

It had now been a long time since the Doctor had received a call from his friends, and he seemed more than pleased to receive them into his study. He listened to Mrs. Thorpe's recital with a quiet look of understanding.

"What a seeming pity that a divine law cannot be invoked without the dross of psychic phenomena," he remarked, smilingly. "The girl is what we call a sensitive, whose organism the astral entities seek to use and control. It is by no means an uncommon complaint, and I am glad you have sought relief thus early. It will undoubtedly result in a most valuable lesson to you, which you cannot learn too well."

Saying which the Doctor bowed his head for some moments in meditation. At length he looked up and said quietly:

"You will please come with me into my inner study and we will give the subject further consideration," and with this he arose and led the way. Mrs. Wade was also asked to join them, and soon all were seated as on previous occasions before the mirrors.

To-night the conditions seemed not so favorable as usual, and some little time passed before any manifestations appeared. When at last a scene began to form, all looked on with the greatest expectancy. Presently the shadowy form of a maiden was shown, and when it became plainer, the features of Sybil Strong were seen clearing from the cloudy mist. It was a strange fact, however, that she sat blindfolded, with hands crossed, as if she were a captive.

"Now," spoke the Doctor, and his words came low and measured, "I feel that we are about to witness no trifling scene, but one of most serious import. Never have I seen a captive appear in the mirror but it meant a serious revelation. We will watch and wait. Do not be disturbed by anything you see, but keep to the thought of perfect faith and oneness. It will all be for the best, I feel sure."

Several minutes were spent in deep silence, during which sad and plaintive notes of music came upon the air. In the midst of this the maiden moved slightly and

heaved a long-drawn sigh. It was indeed a scene most suggestive and solemn. What could it mean? At both the right and the left of the girl was inky darkness, and out of this small spectral forks of flame at last began to appear, and later several haggard faces were dimly visible. Soon other faces, some of them full of cunning and some fiendish and grinning, rose up and surrounded the maiden, until the very air was thick with the terrible-looking throng. From the ends of their fingers came forks of light, which blended in curious contrast with the pale aura which surrounded the girl. Every eye of the astral shades seemed riveted upon their victim in the flesh, who in time relaxed all her own will to that of the invisibles. At this juncture the Doctor said:

"Here we have a most striking example of the way elementals control the so-called sensitives of earth life. Ever since Spiritualism came to be recognized, and long before that, for that matter, these unseen entities have been busy seeking some phys-

ical form through which they can live over again the sensations of their once earthly life. It is not a spiritual life they seek, else they would depart and gain the light in more legitimate ways. They are mere astral shells, with earthly, material loves and desires, and their wish is to obsess the negative form of some man or woman, who, if they once yield themselves, soon become inclined to some strange mental drift or extravagant manners. I do not want you to think that all astral shades have such wretched, earth-bound looks as these. I have seen fine-looking but proud and worldly astrals, doubtless those who lived powerful but material lives upon earth, seeking a medium through whom they might get a mere taste of the old life again. They who pass out after having lived purely spiritual lives, seek the celestial, not the shadowy depths of the astral region. A man or woman can be earth-bound through having left some important work unfinished. Their whole wills, when bent upon the accomplishment of the work, is not broken by the

mere casting off of the earthly body, and, lacking as they are in spiritual knowledge, they can but roam from place to place, vainly imploring release from their thralldom. I believe that entrance into the celestial can be attained even during earth life. One who through wisdom has been illumined, who through experience has overcome and cast aside his idols and risen above the material into the spiritual, can be said to have reached the celestial, and such a spirit need not stop in the realm of shades, but will pass safely through it up to the goal above. It is from the elementals you now see in the mirror that we get the more gross and contradictory manifestations through mediums. A spiritualized person they cannot reach, hence such person does not know they exist. But let a person cultivate them, give up or yield to their dominance, and they might vastly better toy with fire or drink of poison. Their lives while on earth, while the obsession lasts, is seldom anything but a grossly manifested and impure existence at best."

After the Doctor ceased speaking, all sat and watched the remarkable scene in silence. It was indeed both a warning and an explanation of great value. Mr. Thorpe felt the responsibility resting upon himself and wife to remedy the seeming danger the girl was in, so he was moved to ask the question as to the way they had best proceed.

"Your duty will, I think, appear to you in time," replied the Doctor, reflectively. "If it does not and you do not find the remedy at hand, some extreme measures may need to be taken. Sometimes the obsession is so complete that it takes years to release the subject. If you find after another week that these things continue, I think I will be prepared to assist you. Now, before we close, I should like the reverse of this picture to appear, for I believe the lesson is not always best applied by presenting the dark side only. We will sit and mentally desire that the scene be changed."

Soon the picture in the mirror began to fade, and in a few moments the entire glass was dark again. Presently a tinge of yellow

light like an early sunrise appeared in the distance, and beneath this a beautiful valley surrounded by towering mountains. The vibrations of light everywhere breaking forth soon became intense, and figures of lovely men and women and groups of children came moving down the mountains' sides, until they could be plainly seen roaming about the now brilliantly illumined valley. The chanting of music, and songs from hundreds of voices, seemed to fill the air with a deep and holy cadence. A most sublime sketch of liberated souls was this. While the panorama was passing the Doctor said:

"These people are of the masses who have reached the celestial and are at one with the great oversoul. Not that an existence like this is heaven, as we have been taught heaven, but a period in the great chain of existences where material things have been lived out and triumphed over, self has been laid aside, and the vision of eternal rest fills the great horizon beyond. Duty to these people is a word unknown. All they do, all

they think, comes about from a latent, masterful welling up within them most divine, and not that it is a task, or pledge, or prescription issued by some overruling authority. These spirits never return to earth in their personality. Over the strands of love, of fond remembrance of those left behind, come waves of comfort, of inspiration, but never is the personality of the departed one fully recognizable. It is from the artful pretenders in the astral, from the earth-bound, suffering souls that we receive messages upon which we do not rely. From these great and glorified spirits who now appear before us, and upon whose faces appear rest and universal good-will, no word or message other than the message of love is ever received. We do not need personal visitations. And yet the world is full of a love of personality. It is indeed most natural for us to fix in our minds the image of a near friend. In a measure that friend becomes our object of worship, because of our selfish love for him. How much better to let go the mere personal remembrance, and so

catch a glimpse of the inner real man or woman by the deeper, fuller insight, such as comes to us when we have cast out self entirely.

"We will not, however, dwell longer upon this lesson, though there is much behind it to be learned. It seems to have been necessary that you should be shown the dangers the girl in your house is in. And yet, I should advise you to go slow, and do not condemn that which is seemingly pernicious. Do not antagonize, but wait, and put forth love for every being in the universe. In time the astral forces will retreat under the milder trend of things lovable, and peace will prevail at last."

Before these closing words were spoken, the scene in the mirror had begun to fade, and in a few minutes more had disappeared entirely.

* * * * *

Something like an hour later there occurred a most unusual scene in the home of Doctor Wade. Like all great souls, the Doc-

tor had felt deeply the words he had been giving forth. They filled him with contrition, and his great nature was stirred to its uttermost depths. There was yet another room in the house, where he went only upon rare occasions, a room no one but he ever entered. Into this he went with a slow, sad movement, as if a great responsibility rested upon him. It was a small room, a rude, unfinished table in the center, a mere bench at its side, and the four walls were unfinished and bare. On the table was an iron candlestick, and the candle therein gave forth a red, flickering light. In this holiest of holies the good man bowed his head in humbleness and prayer. Great beads of moisture appeared upon his brow, and on his face came a look of pity, of love and tolerance which the common mortal seldom sees. Down into his soul he sought to go and ask for guidance. He seemed almost to penetrate the lower realms of existence, and at times to catch a glimpse of the divine, a ceremony he never performed except in moments of great concern. An hour, then

another hour went by, and still he bowed beneath the load. But after this came peace and rest. His prayers were answered. When he arose the light upon his face was wonderful. His spirit had been in touch with the Most High. His way was now clear and his simple trust was such as no true mystic ever fails to follow.

CHAPTER XXI.

A SCENE IN THE CRYSTAL.

The purely domestic relations now existing between Mr. and Mrs. Thorpe already showed signs of much improvement. New color was returning to Mrs. Thorpe's cheeks, health sat upon the faces of the children, and new friends, not always out of the idle folds of society, came to them, and they were becoming attracted to many intellectual studies, such as make life well worth the living. We would like to mention one delicate proof of this betterment of the home, which came to them out of the great book of Nature. Mrs. Thorpe's love of flowers had become greater than ever. In these she found rare spiritual companionship, and they became to her studies of the correspondence between the higher and the

lower order of things. *Among her plants was a healthy evening jessamine. This plant, as we all know, blossoms and gives off fragrance in the evening. Under favorable conditions it will fill an entire house with the sweetest odor. So effusively had this plant been giving forth its aroma, and all having tired of it somewhat, it was decided to loan it to a near neighbor as an act of kindness. No thought was had but that it would blossom as well in one place as another. But the fact was proven that even plants have souls. On the first evening of its absence little or no odor was discernible. On the second, no odor at all. Here was a curious fact, surely. Into Mrs. Thorpe's sensitive heart a pity came for this tiny member of their group, and she secretly guessed that the plant must have felt the change of the home conditions surrounding it. So with a fond mother-longing she had it returned and all waited expectantly for evening to arrive, for

*A true incident, which came under the writer's personal observation.

possibly the jessamine had been permanently injured by the change. But the proof came with early twilight. By the time it was fairly dark the plant fairly purred with fragrance, as if in answer to the kindness shown it. Thus it was proven that all life, both animate and inanimate, gives forth vibrations—responses, if we choose to call them such—to our every thought. How truly necessary, then, that we cultivate only the true and the beautiful. It is yet a mystery unsolved, why some families can raise such profusions of flowers, while they will scarcely grow for others. When the higher law of unwritten life has been followed by the world at large, a correct solution to this fact may be forthcoming. Verily, there is wisdom to be had out of the very atmosphere about us, and even from the rocks and from every herb that grows. What a wonderful book has Nature opened before us, and what multitudes of people are there living who seldom if ever look into it!

With a quickened insight into natural law did the Thorpes now seek to guard the welfare of Sybil Strong. They felt ready to face any emergency, only so that they faced it understandingly. But the girl showed no signs of improvement, and in some respects the troublesome manifestations increased. These would change with every caprice of the child's own mind, until her tendencies to commit indiscretions caused them still greater anxieties. They endeavored to surround her with a spirit of love and kindness. They treated her as they would a person sick with an imaginary ailment, and yet at times, and at times most unexpected, some new and meaningless event would occur wholly outside the will or wish of anyone about her. So in spite of their efforts at concealment, outside minds became aware of some of the facts, and the curiosity of many well-meaning persons was attracted hither, and from these some curious sprays of advice were obtained. One Mrs. Rish, pleasingly good in herself, but a little too kindly disposed to-

ward the marvelous, called one day and took Mrs. Thorpe into her confidence.

"She is a medium by birth, I feel sure of it," she said, with much concern. "I believe you should take her to developing seances, and so secure some definite control for her. She may yet astonish you."

Mrs. Thorpe smiled wisely and took the lady's words in good part. "Have you no fear of obsession?" she asked.

"None in the least. If she surrenders dutifully and with unselfish thoughts, and yields to the higher impulses of divine law, no harm can come to her. Why, my friend Mrs. M.— is already an oracle of note. Her control is Pythagoras, and such wisdom! Do believe me, Mrs. Thorpe, our duty to reclaim lost souls is a most pressing one. This trust must have been given you by right. I would never let the opportunity go by to enlighten a world which stands so sadly in need of wisdom."

Thus the tempter came into full view, and at times with words most plausible and kindly disposed. But when alone in their

chapel, and when the law of the truer life was invoked, both Mr. and Mrs. Thorpe saw beyond the veil of mere phenomenal things, and when they would emerge from here, and take up the sterner duties about them, their simple rest of soul quite overcame the effects of all outside interferences.

Some very pertinent advice was one evening given them by Mr. Servetus, who had called to inquire after the welfare of his friends.

"I do not wish you to conclude," he said, in a way which denoted his love of justice, "that all so-called spiritual manifestations are essentially base. Much of it is quite commendable. We have the psychometric reader, the impressible foreteller of events, and the person who, discarding the phenomena entirely, gets his wisdom wholly from the philosophy, and so rears a purely moral side to his work in the place of kindling a love for the marvelous. Such persons I deem to be in touch with the better and truer revelation. We have these same people in the Bible, and in every age since

the Bible was written. To-day the full-souled healer relieves the sick by the laying on of hands. We go back to Christ's time and the days of the prophets, and call such things miracles. They were anything but that. They are not miracles to-day. Some phases of phenomena seem to have been necessary to stir the fossilized depths of the material world, but that time is past, and the present philosophy is all we need. Our lines of communication, like the wires of the telephone, have passed through the psychic spheres, and we are getting our knowledge from a higher source. The hardy Pilgrim and Puritan came and broke our soil, rugged as it was, yet that is no reason why we should forever remain plowmen. So I firmly believe that the crudities of phenomena should never be invoked. Their effects are most detrimental, and like the errors of many past creeds and dynasties, they will yet find their proper level, and there remain."

Mr. Servetus, still firm in his words of counsel, and ever ready to give them out

when occasion required, seemed to possess beliefs which were deeply rooted and logical. They were ever tempered with that justice which the true teacher must have to succeed. This made him a most welcome guest of the Thorpes, though he had found time to come but seldom of late.

Thus after counsel had been obtained from two reliable sources, another week went by, but the annoyances seemed rather to increase than to diminish. The girl was becoming nervous and excitable, like one with a harassed temper or unbalanced mind. Once some strange influence overcame her quite, and a violent flow of language came from her lips, which, to say the least, was not altogether uninteresting. She would recite strange couplets and broken sentences of all sorts, which meant little or nothing. Once she arose in her night and attempted to belabor Mr. Thorpe with her fists, until he was obliged to seize her wrists and hold her secure until the spasm was past. It was a peculiar fact, however, that when in the lodge-room with the other six

members, she was quite normal and self-possessed. This gave Mr. Thorpe a clue that the power centered there was a superior force, and he was in hopes it would some day rid the unfortunate girl of the obsession altogether.

One night in particular a revelation in the globe came which seemed most remarkable to Mrs. Thorpe, to whom alone the scene appeared. She saw on a solid pedestal a crudely shaped mass resembling lava. Darkness surrounded it at first, but afterward small, shooting flames began darting out of it, and tiny streams of molten liquid dropped and fell to the earth. A phosphorescent light began to appear around the mass, and before long it seemed filled with an inner heat and flame. Soon dark fragments of dross began to fall away from the lava, and at each upheaval a more luminous surrounding appeared. This continued until all the dross seemed to have fallen away, after which a brilliant light of vibrating rays, resembling those of the sun, appeared where the mass, now consumed, had

rested. Intuitively Mrs. Thorpe seemed to get the meaning of this. Her astrological sign being Leo, and her governing planet the sun, this scene was very aptly shown her. She believed it meant that under the blight of burning flame all dross was to be destroyed, leaving only the luminous, ethereal sunlight of everlasting love and purity. It might or it might not have applied to their present difficulties, but at all events the scene was strikingly suggestive. Not another person in the room had witnessed it. It was rarely the case that more than one in the group saw scenes of this nature at any single sitting. All scenes that ever came to them were purely emblematical, and many times it taxed their minds to give them a proper rendering. At times their meanings were most obvious. Possibly when their wisdom became greater, their solution might become easier.

It was just after the company had reached the parlor that three loud raps came upon the piano. So restful and spiritually tempered had been everything in the chapel,

that this return of the psychic disturbances was startlingly annoying. Hero, who was looking the picture of animation, suddenly dropped his ears and strode out of the room.

"Poor fellow," commented Miss Ames. "He feels our affliction keenly. But were he human we could assure him that all earthly troubles have an ending."

She took hold of Sybil's arm and bade her look into her eyes. Sybil did so with an air of abandon that was anything but pleasing. It was even true that the elementals had complete control of her again. Colonel Risley endeavored to laugh the matter aside, for the Colonel never took things seriously.

"If casting out demons was in my line," he said, "I would give you a sample of it. As it is, suppose we call Doctor Wade in to perform the ceremony for us. The Doctor has a rather clever store of energy in that line, I believe."

"The Doctor has offered to help us if we need him," said Mr. Thorpe. Before the Colonel's remarks Sybil had gone out of the

room with Mrs. Thorpe, who now found it necessary to look after her charge personally as she would an irresponsible child.

On Mrs. Thorpe's return a further discussion was had, which resulted in their setting aside a special evening when Doctor Wade should be invited to be present. Extreme measures must now be resorted to, and the Doctor seemed the only person in the world to whom they might appeal in this hour of need.

CHAPTER XXII.

A DENOUEMENT.

During all these events there somehow seemed to rest in the minds of our friends the thought that this difficulty was to be of short duration, so they endeavored to get as much wisdom out of it as possible while it lasted. So united were they in their faiths, so truly loyal to their better natures were they, that the reasonings of outside observers had little or no weight with them. Each polarized with intense love toward the girl's complete triumph over the astral forces, and while the invisible strife went on, a most indubitable fortress of superior occult law must the elementals have found, even here in this most humble, and we might say, ordinary household. Yet the coming of Doctor Wade, inasmuch as he had never yet attended any of their sittings, was looked

forward to with many anticipations. When the Doctor received the invitation to come, his memory went back to his night of meditation in his own dark and barren closet. But he said nothing of this to anyone. What came to him there was never given to human ear. It doubtless meant that even his own superior powers were to be soon tried, even to the danger-line, if need be.

"It is well that we be doubly guarded," he said to his good wife, when Mr. Thorpe had gone. "We must not be shaken in the least. You are asked to go with me, to help concentrate the forces. It will not be the work of an idle hour, but a task that few human beings in modern times have been asked to perform. Let us trust that all will be well. Only the utmost peace of soul must prevail. This thought comes to me as if borne in upon some gentle, cooling zephyr of divine assurance. I am moved to think that it is not we who are to do the work, but that it is to be done by Him who seeth even the sparrow's fall."

While these arrangements were being made, other and more troublesome demonstrations came about, and it was at last necessary to keep the girl under constant surveillance to prevent her doing herself bodily harm. The mischievous forces seemed to be holding high carnival, now that their subject was so thoroughly under their control.

At last the memorable evening came, the night when little guessed the outside world that a terrible battle of unseen forces was about to be fought. When the Doctor entered the house, some marvelously new light rested in his eyes. He said little, but walked slowly from room to room, occasionally stopping to cast his gaze heavenward, as if in prayer. He seemed to be in a sort of half trance, and, guarded by his wife, who enjoined silence upon all, he seemed able to conserve his forces most satisfactorily. Two more seats were provided in the chapel, for to-night there would be nine members of the group—another mystic number, though none thought of this at the time. Once the

Doctor paused before the unfortunate girl, and holding his hands above her he repeated a silent benediction of reverent love. Soon after this all went to the chapel.

It was a most solemn conclave. The girl seemed enveloped in a dreamy film of abstractions, and soon after taking her seat in the semi-circle, she seemed to lapse into a state of almost complete forgetfulness. Hero, the grand old monarch of his race, was given his accustomed place before the globe. None seemed to have observed that an intense feeling of excess had filled the brute's entire being. His very presence was like a glow of protection and heroic love, for his had been a mission no selfish human heart could even have planned.

What a wonderful battery was this! The room had filled with a strained yet peaceful presence, which the elementals would not nor could they have entered. From the Doctor's lips at last fell a murmured prayer. His eyes were closed, while the eyes of the others were centered upon the crystal. Sybil sat next to Mrs. Thorpe, and was

breathing heavily, as if undergoing some terrible transformation. After a time the Doctor, who sat in the center of the group, slowly arose and turned his gaze heavenward. He raised one hand in devout supplication. While he stood thus the silence grew livid with intensity. It seemed as if he was calling down upon them a consecration out of the seventh heaven. It was a ceremony of silence, save the occasional moving of the Doctor's lips. In the deepest of the suspense Mrs. Thorpe saw in the globe the head of the Sphinx. This truly signified silence. Next she saw a long, narrow entrance to a cave, which led into a secret palace cut in solid rock. In the center of this palace sat a group of Brothers, and upon them fell the rays of a brilliant light from above. The same livid presence seemed to pervade this mystic chamber, which was reflected in the peaceful looks upon the faces of the Brothers.

What, indeed, was to be the culmination of all this? One simple thought, denoting the loss of faith, and perhaps the entire

throng might be stricken dumb. It was a terrible risk, though none knew this so well as the Doctor, who, very fortunately, had now passed the point of doubt into the realm of perfect faith. For the time he dwelt above earthly things, and was not of the earth. A smile of a true saint sat upon his face, and when he prayed the delicate, sensitized presence was stirred as nothing else could stir it. No heart present dared measure the time, for time in eternity means nothing. It seemed as if every heart-throb, every breath that was drawn, could be heard. The great oversoul of the heavens must have been surging in upon them, until it had filled every heart with vibrations of ecstasy.

At last a prolonged silence came, and the battery seemed most livid and tense. Hero, as if he saw some unusual sight, some shining reward for having saved a soul from the tortures of a living death, half raised himself upon his haunches and stared into vacancy. Instantly thereafter a flash of light, blinding at first, then ending in a

vapory cloud, filled the room, and uttering a cry of pain, Sybil fell in a swoon into Mrs. Thorpe's embrace. It was a fearful moment. So blinded had all been at first, that it was a full moment before a muscle could be stirred. A gasp came from the stricken girl, then a moan of anguish, both of which fell like a fearful doom upon the ears of all. Still half in a trance the Doctor arose and took the girl in his arms. A hush like a knell came next, and all cheeks were blanched with alarm.

"See," exclaimed Mrs. Thorpe, pointing to Hero's place upon the floor. "What miracle is this?"

All turned and looked. It may have been a miracle, indeed. It may not have been a miracle. Hero, the unfailing friend of man, had vanished!

CHAPTER XXIII.**CONCLUSION.**

It is but a brief task to catch up the remaining shreds of our narrative. Long days and nights of patient watching at the bedside of Sybil Strong—for the girl had barely escaped with her life from the terrible ordeal—more light, as experiences came grouping themselves together, new studies in the occult to be undertaken, a deeper charity for the world to be maintained—many, many things which we need not take the time to mention, filled up the succeeding months in our friends' lives. What made the whole so excessively real was the fact that the outside world knew nothing of it. The battery became a consecrated medium through which a great and lasting good was being accomplished. Had outside minds been cognizant of it, the pow-

er would have been more or less dissipated. The mystic lodge-room had indeed become most isolated, and in it great but humble messages were being received. These came not altogether through scenes in the crystal, but more frequently from a still better and higher source. It were but human to mourn the sudden and mysterious disappearance of Hero, he who had come, had gone—the Fates tell us where!—yea, he who had served as no human soul ever served, with not so much as a hint of self—it were but human to mourn for him, for never had a denizen of earth fulfilled a more deserving mission than Hero!

A year sped quickly by. Sybil lived, and grew, and bid fair to become a truest of mystics. She grew radiant and youthful, her eyes filled with a sweet, forgiving spirit, she learned fast, and to Mr. and Mrs. Thorpe she seemed like a child of their own. Was she not their own as much as any children are our own? Her re-birth had taken place under the ban of their united loves and un-

selfish devotion, and had she not a justifiable claim upon them?

And had not the home of the Thorpes been indeed most justly reclaimed in other ways? Oh, complaining ones, ye who know not the happiness of true wedlock, why do ye live, and suffer, and grow old before your time? It is but a step into the new life, only that the step be taken with the true knowledge and intent. Be ye sufferers no longer, but go into the recesses of thy inner, secret selves and ask for light. Home is to be the very center of the coming reform upon earth.

To the Thorpes and their friendly colleagues the work was a most glorious one. Out upon the great sea of error went the white-winged messenger of thought to catch up the floundering seaman who is hurled from the mast of popular superstition and materiality. And thousands of other thought centers like this one are being formed, through whose silent influences must the new century see the light. Let us choose quickly the part we will play in the

great drama. Delays but put us farther from the happiness we are longing for.

Before we close we wish to relate a single circumstance which grew out of the friendly association of the seven members of the mystic lodge. As time went by Colonel Risley and Miss Harriet became the most devoted friends. How unlike the average modern writer to believe they never became even more than friends. In truth, there came between them a positive unity of two separate destinies, both of which were filled with much true wisdom. Mature in years, finely mated as to temperaments, just to each other, and filled with the new life they were already living, shall we be chided if we incline to the belief that marriage with them was not logical as well as legitimate? But let us confide to the reader that it was not one of those marriages which are forged by the mere reading of the ritual by a clergyman. Nor was it a marriage to be read out of existence by the law.

As good fortune has shaped it, we were privileged to overhear a little privacy be-

tween the Colonel and his wife which, if it is to be divulged by us, we trust the reader will never repeat, so long as it remains a sacred family secret. The Colonel had been a Benedict some three months or more, and was taking a sort of inventory of himself, after the manner of men.

"I say, my dear, do you suppose we have an undoubted right to all these cheery hours on earth?" he asked. How severely odd that he should have spoken so seriously. Then, as if the expression had cost him too much, he reached for the hand of his mate, and looking intently into her palm, said good-naturedly, "If it hadn't taken two to decide this matter, what a wretched bargain it would have been, really. As it is—"

"As it is?" she echoed, with a smile of comfortable mistrust.

"Why, as it is, we shall be obliged to make the most of it."

And we are pleased to say that this they did with a most complete domestic exactness.

THE END.